

# Fr. William Porras, a Catholic Chaplain at Harvard University (1954-1960)

FEDERICO M. REQUENA

*Fr. William Porras, a Catholic Chaplain at Harvard University (1954-1960)*, was originally published in Spanish in *Studia et Documenta. Rivista dell'Istituto Storico San Josemaría Escrivá*.

## Introduction

On October 19, 1954, the Archbishop of Boston, Richard Cushing, appointed Guillermo Porras the first Opus Dei priest to settle in Boston, as chaplain of the Harvard Catholic Club. This article investigates the reasons that led the Archbishop to make that decision. The article also looks at Fr. Porras' role in various events, such as the beginning of the regular celebration of Mass at Harvard, the first personal meeting of the Boston Archbishop and the President of Harvard, and the establishment of the Charles Chauncey Stillman Chair of Catholic Studies. Finally, the author addresses the chaplain's vision of how Catholics should live and make their Catholicism present in an institution such as Harvard in the lead up to the Second Vatican Council.

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## **FR. WILLIAM PORRAS, A CATHOLIC CHAPLAIN AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY (1954-1960)**[\[1\]](#)

### **INTRODUCTION**

On October 19, 1954, the Archbishop of Boston, Most Rev. Richard J. Cushing, appointed Fr. William Porras, a priest of Opus Dei, chaplain of the Harvard Catholic Club. The Archbishop informed Fr. Porras of this appointment during a visit he made to Trimount House, a residence for students established by Opus Dei in Boston[\[2\]](#), to inaugurate the residence and celebrate Mass in the chapel. The media took note of the event. Thus, the Boston *Traveler* published a photograph with the caption “New Chapel – Archbishop Richard J. Cushing celebrated the first Mass at the new chapel of the Opus Dei house, 22 Marlboro St. The chapel is the first in Boston for resident college students”[\[3\]](#).

Fr. William Porras was 37 years old. Born in El Paso, Texas, he had studied law in Mexico and obtained a Ph.D. in history in Spain. He had been ordained to the priesthood three years earlier and was the first priest of Opus Dei to reside in Boston, having arrived there from Chicago in 1953.

In this study we will consider the motives that may have led Archbishop Cushing to appoint as chaplain a priest from a relatively recent institution in the Church, which had been present in Boston a little over two years, and in the United States only since 1949. After all, The Archbishop, known for his enterprising ecumenical spirit, had authority over more than a thousand priests in the diocesan clergy, not to mention the presence of a considerable number of priests belonging to various religious congregations operating in the Archdiocese.

“Fr. Bill” Porras, as he soon became known, remained as chaplain at Harvard for six years, until June of 1960. A year before his appointment, Nathan Marsh Pusey had been chosen President of the University. Pusey, a devout Episcopalian, was concerned about integrating secular knowledge with religious faith, and continued to promote the academic excellence for which the university had been known for many years[\[4\]](#). President Pusey’s tenure coincided with a vigorous presence of the Catholic minority at Harvard[\[5\]](#).

During the years of Fr. Porras’ tenure as chaplain, Mass began to be celebrated monthly on campus; in addition, the Archbishop and the President of the University took part in a yearly social gathering organized by the Catholic Club in one of the University buildings; and the Charles Chauncey Stillman Chair of Catholic Studies was established, with the British historian Christopher Dawson as its first occupant, from 1958 until 1962. The Harvard Catholic Club grew in number of members and organized a number of high-level cultural and intellectual activities. In the following pages, we will consider the role that Fr. Porras played in these developments[\[6\]](#).

Finally, we will study Fr. Porras's vision of how Catholics – and laypersons in particular – should make their faith a visible reality in secular institutions of higher learning, such as Harvard University, in the 1950s. Such a consideration can assist in gaining a deeper understanding of the relation between Catholicism and secularization.

As is well known, the years that followed the end of the Second World War witnessed a considerable expansion and development in Catholic institutions of higher learning. In the years preceding the Second Vatican Council, this development involved a continuation of the discussion, dating back to the 19th century, on the degree to which Catholics may participate in the secular cultural institutions of their milieu. In the case of education, one of the questions that was posed was whether Catholics should be allowed to attend secular institutions of higher learning. This discussion has sometimes been described as a moment in the transition between the mentality of a “Catholic Revival” as opposed to the tendency toward “assimilation” into a secularized culture as manifested in the 1960s and 1970s. On the one hand, the writings of John Tracy Ellis in the 1950s encouraged the presence of Catholics in the culture; but at the same time there existed a strong “defensive” tendency toward creating a separate cultural and social environment – a “Catholic ghetto” – and a distrust of scientific knowledge[7]. The crisis surrounding the St. Benedict Center and the condemnation of Fr. Leonard Feeney – events which are relevant for the purposes of the present study – are an extreme example of this last position.

The six years of Fr. Porras' presence as Chaplain can also shed light on the presence of Catholics at Harvard, as well as on the relations between the University and the Archdiocese; and this, in turn allows us to understand indirectly the presence and development of Opus Dei in the U.S. during the years preceding the Second Vatican Council[8].

## **1. WHY FR. PORRAS?**

To answer the question of why Archbishop Cushing decided to appoint Fr. Porras as chaplain of the Harvard Catholic Club, we will consider three factors: the following questions: the Harvard Catholic Club and the crisis caused by the St. Benedict Center; the person of Fr. Porras; the presence of Opus Dei in the Archdiocese of Boston.

### ***a. The Harvard Catholic Club and the crisis at the St. Benedict Center***

Thanks to the efforts of some Catholic students and the welcoming attitude of the University authorities, the Catholic Club began to function in the late 1800s, in spite of the apparent lack of interest on the part of the Boston Archdiocese. Over the years, the number of Catholic students at Harvard had grown; meanwhile, the University had been losing its religious dimension and had become secularized[9].

At the time, there were some 250 Catholics at Harvard, and the establishment of a Catholic Club allowed them to have a visible presence on campus. In 1900, Phillips Brooks House was established as a center for religious and charitable organizations, and the Harvard Catholic Club began to use it as a meeting place<sup>[10]</sup>.

During these early years, no chaplain was named; nor was there any connection with St. Paul's Parish in Harvard Square, though such a connection arose, as was logical, very soon after the establishment of the Club.

In 1901, Fr. John Farrell, associate pastor of St. Paul's, was officially named chaplain of the Catholic Club. From that time until 1954, when Fr. Porras was named, there were eleven chaplains, six of whom were at the same time pastors or associates at St. Paul's. Throughout these years, the relationship between the parish and the Club varied according to the circumstances and the persons involved – at times it was very close, at others more distant, and this led to occasional changes in the nature and operation of the Catholic Club.

In the early years of the 20th century, the Jesuit Fr. John Lafarge, a Harvard alumnus and a convert to the Catholic Church, suggested that a religious congregation, entrusted with the care of the parish and with the chaplaincy of the University, would be the most adequate and permanent way of serving both the parish and the University community. Of the two religious orders, Fr. La Farge saw the Society of Jesus as the more appropriate (the other was the Paulist congregation). However, in 1907, the recently named Archbishop of Boston, Most Rev. William H. O'Connell, decided to entrust both the parish and the Catholic Club to archdiocesan clergy. Although Archbishop O'Connell, like many bishops and clergy at the time, did not look kindly on the presence of Catholic students at Harvard, he entrusted to the Catholic Club a property situated at 32 and 34 Mt. Auburn St., which came to be known as the Newman House<sup>[11]</sup>.

The period between 1907 and 1925 came to be known as the "Club House Era." During this time, the Catholic Club became more closely identified with St. Paul's Parish, and in 1913 the pastor of St. Paul's, Fr. John J. Ryan, an alumnus of Boston College, became chaplain of both the Harvard and the Radcliffe Catholic Clubs<sup>[12]</sup>.

During these years, relations between the University and Archbishop O'Connell became strained on the occasion of the dedication of the new St. Paul's Church in 1916. On that occasion, the Archbishop expressed his concern about the process of secularization affecting society. "There is a very great danger," said the Archbishop, "not far distant from this sacred edifice. It is the growing tendency to separate science from faith, and spiritual from material forces"<sup>[13]</sup>.

In any case, by the 1920s the Catholic Club had become a presence in the University, and had established a program of activities that attracted a regular attendance of some fifty members. A much larger number attended the yearly dance, which became the best-known event in the Club calendar and attracted as many as a thousand couples. Nevertheless, some Catholics complained that the Catholic Club was stagnating and seemed unable to draw the attention of a greater number of Catholic students (at the time, about a quarter of the Catholic on campus were involved in the Club)[\[14\]](#).

The situation failed to improve with the arrival of Fr. Augustine Hickey as pastor of St. Paul's. That same year, the Newman House was torn down to make room for a new rectory for the parish. Until the fall of 1933, the Catholic Club made use of a property on De Wolf St. but that building was soon lost as well. At this point, the Harvard Catholic Club became, in fact, subordinate to the parish, to which Fr. Hickey devoted his principal efforts. A sign of this situation was the fact that, between 1930 and 1932, four successive chaplains were appointed by the Archdiocese.

During these years, the "House system" was becoming an essential feature in the life of the University. Upperclassmen were assigned to one or another of the "Houses", not only for purposes of residence, but also for some academic activities. Each House became a focus for social interaction for students in the last three years of their undergraduate involvement. At one point, Fr. Francis Green, who, besides being chaplain of the Catholic Club, was also an associate pastor of St. Paul's, attempted to integrate the Club's activities with the House system, but achieved only a limited measure of success. The lack of a "home base" for the Catholic Club was obviously a serious drawback to its operations. To this difficulty was added, some years later, the involvement of the U.S. in the Second World War from 1941 onward, with all its effects on the life of the University.

This situation which extended over a period of more than 20 years, gave rise to a number of initiatives on the part of Catholics in and around the Harvard community, which were independent from both St. Paul's parish and the Harvard Catholic Club. The best-known of these was the St. Benedict Center.

Properly speaking, the St. Benedict Center was never a part of the history of the Harvard Catholic Club, or even of the efforts of the Archdiocese to provide pastoral attention to the University community; and yet, it is part of the history of the Catholic presence at Harvard; and the crisis it caused had serious repercussions in the history of the Catholic Club in the 1950s[\[15\]](#). It is in this light that we can best understand the appointment of Fr. Porras.

The St. Benedict Center arose in 1941, as an initiative of some students and faculty members at Harvard, assisted by the efforts of Mrs. Catherine Clark, who operated the St. Thomas More Bookstore on Church Street. From the beginning it enjoyed the approval of Fr. Hickey, the

pastor, and of the chaplain of the Catholic Club, Fr. Green. However, in spite of the fact that it was situated across the street from St. Paul's Church, its activities were not carried out in the context of the parish. The Center included a conference room, space for discussion groups and a library.

In 1942, Fr. Leonard Feeney, S.J. became active in the St. Benedict center. At the time he was some 45 years old and, after ten years of teaching at Boston College, was at the height of his literary and academic career. He was known as a charismatic speaker who attracted crowds. In 1945 Fr. Feeney was named full-time chaplain and became the heart and soul of the St. Benedict Center<sup>[16]</sup>.

The future cardinal Avery Dulles, a Harvard student at the time and a pioneer of the St. Benedict Center, recalled the atmosphere of the Center before the crisis erupted: "Thursday nights were special, because they were reserved for Fr. Feeney's weekly lectures on theology. The Center was vastly overcrowded that night, with people on the street leaning into the doors and windows. By the summer of 1946 the Center was a beehive of activity. Scores of students became converts to Catholicism, and many others, who had drifted away, returned to Catholic practice"<sup>[17]</sup>.

But as time went on, the atmosphere changed. Throughout 1947, Fr. Feeney and those who frequented the Center began to lay a heavy stress on what they saw as an incompatibility between the Catholic faith and the increasingly secularized American culture. At the same time as he propagated an extreme interpretation of the teaching of the Church on the salvation of non-Catholics, Fr. Feeney began to encourage Catholics to abandon Harvard. Ultimately, the ensuing controversy, which some have dubbed the "Boston Heresy Case", became the occasion for a consultation directed to the Holy See by the Archbishop of Boston, and the authoritative response of the Holy Office in the matter. One description of the controversy refers to it as "a reaction to the direction that the Catholic Church was taking by moving from the ideals of a religious past to the realities of a secular present"<sup>[18]</sup>.

Archbishop Cushing, who had been a high-school classmate of Fr. Feeney, had tried to resolve the situation without resorting to extreme means; but this became impossible. In 1949, after Fr. Feeney refused to accept the indications of his religious superiors in Boston, he was expelled from the Society of Jesus and forbidden to teach. The Archbishop was thus faced with a delicate situation.

Richard J. Cushing was a priest of the Archdiocese of Boston, and became its Archbishop in 1944. Even before the crisis of the St. Benedict Center, he had received requests seeking a solution to the situation of the Harvard Catholic Club. In 1946, Clement Lee Counts, Jr., a Harvard alumnus and a member of the Harvard Archeological Society, had written, "While we know that the Church would rather not have her men there, the fact remains that they do go,

and will go. Consequently, they need proper care and guidance. As a matter of fact, Harvard men are often outstanding leaders, and the Church can well use leaders of strong faith and understanding”[\[19\]](#).

In view of the St. Benedict Center crisis, by 1949 it was clear that a “student center” for Catholics at Harvard was becoming an urgent necessity. In February of that year, Francis J. Milligan, a recent alumnus of the Harvard Law School, wrote to the Archbishop, “We fully realize the difficulties presented by the present situation, and your position, as you explained to us, is not an easy one. But we would like to take the opportunity to tell you again that our interest and energy have not diminished in any respect”[\[20\]](#).

The dialogue between the Catholic Club and the Archbishop continued into the following year. In March of 1950, John J. Trudon, chairman of the Catholic Club Fund Committee, suggested to Archbishop Cushing that, while the ultimate goal would be the construction of a catholic Center, “because of the urgency of the problem” it would be important to find a provisional solution, involving a rented facility and, above all, the naming of a competent chaplain. “He must be -wrote Trudon- eminently qualified to handle the intellectual problems of students on the university level”[\[21\]](#).

The Archbishop, after his experience with the St. Benedict Center, was determined to approach the matter very carefully. In his reply to Trudon, he stated clearly that “in a project of this kind the Archdiocese must have absolute control”. While he insisted that for the moment, he was not ready to respond to these requests, he promised to deal with the matter by the beginning of the following academic year[\[22\]](#). The two met again before the summer, and the Archbishop expressed his desire to begin a fund drive to as to establish a Catholic Center at Harvard. Once again, he insisted that “this project must be carefully planned”[\[23\]](#).

Archbishop Cushing was, in fact, considering the matter with Fr. Hickey, the pastor of St. Paul’s, who was also the Vicar General of the Archdiocese. In answer to one of Fr. Hickey’s letters, he wrote, “Your letter of July 2 set me thinking again of the character and purpose of the Catholic Center for students at Harvard which you plan to open in the fall”.

The pastor explained to the Archbishop his vision of such a Catholic Center, taking into account the circumstances of the time. It would require room for some 75 people, since “the usual meetings of the Catholic Club are not larger than this number”.

According to Fr. Hickey, the Center should clearly not be a “Club house,” but rather a place “for discussion and progress in knowledge and goodness”. It should be open only when the Reverend director was present; he suggested that, as an experiment, the Center could be open four hours in the afternoon and two or three hours in the evening. Since during the first year the Center would function on a part-time basis, the pastor suggested that two priests

(one in charge and an assistant) be assigned to inaugurate the project. He also gave the Archbishop a profile of a future chaplain: “A priest assigned to this work must be intelligent, with academic interest and some academic standing, and with understanding and sympathy for young students. This is why I suggest faculty members of the Seminary”[\[24\]](#).

In fact, the efforts made during the summer of 1950 did not achieve any degree of success, although a few donations were received, including an unspecified amount from a hitherto little-known congressman by the name of John F. Kennedy[\[25\]](#).

With the beginning of the 1950-51 school year, Archbishop Cushing adopted a provisional solution: as chaplain of the Catholic Club he named his own secretary, Fr. Lawrence J. Riley, who was also on the faculty of St. John’s Seminary.

Fr. Riley continued as chaplain through the 1951-52 school year. In a report on his first year in that position, he informed the Archbishop about the status of the programs at the Club, which involved between 30 and 40 people. Fr. Riley added, in an unenthusiastic tone, “for neither activity was there much support from the members of the Club”[\[26\]](#).

In the fall of 1952, Fr. Riley was able to pass on the responsibility for the Catholic Club to Fr. Vincent McQuade, O.S.A., president of Merrimack College, in Andover, MA. Fr. McQuade was obviously deeply involved in matters of the college, which was about 30 miles from Cambridge, and therefore could dedicate even less time to his work as chaplain[\[27\]](#).

Meanwhile Fr. Feeney continued to ignore the warnings given him, until, in 1953, the Holy See excommunicated him[\[28\]](#). As a consequence, renewed efforts were made to alert the Archdiocese to the need for “a well-trained chaplain, and for a social center for Catholics at Harvard”. Thus, in 1954 a Fr. Cotter relayed the concern of a Harvard student with whom he was acquainted: “I hope that something will be done by the Archbishop about this situation in the near future.” This news reached the archdiocese in April 1954[\[29\]](#).

Catholics at Harvard wanted Church authorities to leave behind the Feeney crisis and to provide the pastoral services they needed. “Now, when the word ‘center’ is mentioned around here, the sound ‘Benedict’ is rarely far behind, but, in terms of the student, unjustly so. Objections on the basis of the Feeney failure overlook the fact that it is the student here at Harvard and Radcliffe who is frustrated in his efforts to keep alive in Catholic thought”[\[30\]](#).

In the summer of 1954, the president of the Harvard Catholic Club, Leo Zavatone, wrote to Fr. McQuade, then chaplain of the Club, concerning the need to avoid the situation – the lack of a program – in which they had found themselves the previous year. He added, “I am also working hard to build up the Catholic Club for next year, talking to students I know and various other persons who have an interest in the Club (namely Fr. Nugent at the Newman



Center, Dr. Rodgers, Fr. Porras at Opus Dei House & members of the M.I.T. C.C. plus others”[\[31\]](#).

As we have seen, in October of 1954, Archbishop Cushing named Fr. Porras chaplain at the Harvard Catholic Club, when he came to inaugurate Trimount House, the Opus Dei residence mentioned by Zavatore.

***b. Fr. William Porras, historian and priest of Opus Dei***

Guillermo Jesus Porras Muñoz was born in El Paso, TX on July 22, 1917, and was baptized a few months later in Sacred Heart Church in that city[\[32\]](#). His parents were from the state of Chihuahua and returned there once young William had finished elementary school. He attended high school in the “Instituto Científico y Literario” operated by the Jesuits. His later studies took place in non-Catholic institutions, generally of a secularist bent. After high school, he attended the “Escuela Libre de Derecho” (Law School), in Mexico City, where he obtained a law degree. At the same time, his interest in history led him to take part in the first “Cátedras de Humanidades” (studies in the humanities) of the “Colegio de México” and to attend classes in the “Facultad de Filosofía y Letras” (humanities department) in the National Autonomous University of Mexico, as well as studies in the National School of Anthropology[\[33\]](#).

Guillermo Porras soon became known as a historian. Between 1944 and 1946, he published articles in the “Revista Chihuahua” and the “Boletín de la Sociedad Chihuahuense de Estudios Históricos”.

In 1946, he moved to Spain, with a scholarship from the Instituto de Cultura Hispánica, to do research in various archives: The National Archives of Spain, the Archivo de Indias and the Archive of Simancas.

He obtained a Doctorate in History from the university of Seville, with a dissertation on the government of Nueva Vasconia.

While in Spain, he met several members of Opus Dei who were also involved in research on Latin American history. He was attracted to this Catholic organization, which consists primarily of laypersons, and which proposes the goal of seeking Christian perfection in the middle of the world through the sanctification or professional work, contributing in this way to the evangelizing mission of the Church. In July of 1947, Porras requested to be admitted in Opus Dei as a numerary, committed to a life of celibacy[\[34\]](#).

An immediate result of his commitment was his involvement in promoting and directing some of the student residences being established by Opus Dei, such as Moncloa in Madrid

and Guadaira in Seville. During summer vacations, he took part in the organization of courses at the Menendez y Pelayo summer university and the Spanish-American University of La Rábida. His correspondence shows the intense activity that the young man undertook to provide for the human and Christian development of university students, as well as his passion for what was known in those days as “Intellectual Apostolate”. Related to these efforts was his scholarly work, which put him in contact with people involved in Latin American studies, such as the American historian Adele Kibre, whom he met at the Hispanic-American archive known as the “Archivo de Indias,” situated in Seville. She offered to obtain for him an invitation to teach at the University of California, “or more precisely,” as Porrás wrote to her, “to remind them of an invitation they had extended to me years ago”[\[35\]](#). At the time, Kibre, who had worked in the Vatican Secret Archives, was considering her decision to become a Catholic, and wanted to count on the advice of her colleague William Porrás[\[36\]](#).

Soon after his commitment to Opus Dei, William Porrás had the opportunity to meet its founder, St. Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer, who was 45 years old at the time[\[37\]](#). They met on a number of occasions, at times at the request of the founder himself. “Your letters, which I have read and reread in Rome, have always made me very happy. But I would like to see you and talk with you before I have to get involved in any more running around”[\[38\]](#). Soon they came to be very much in tune with each other; and in 1948, Porrás told the founder that he would be ready to be ordained a priest[\[39\]](#).

Early that year, Porrás had written to St. Josemaría, “I was particularly impressed by your insistence that we go to America”[\[40\]](#). The following October, in Madrid, he was teaching English to a small group of members of Opus Dei who were preparing to move to the U.S. and begin their apostolic work there. The following spring, he spent two weeks in Rome, close to the founder[\[41\]](#).

He had begun his studies in theology while he was still carrying out his research, and, on July 1, 1951, he was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop José María García Lahiguera, auxiliary bishop of Madrid.

The founder of Opus Dei had been counting on Fr. Porrás to help develop Opus Dei’s apostolic activities in the United States, which had begun two years earlier[\[42\]](#). Thus, after celebrating his first Solemn Mass in his hometown in Mexico, Fr. Porrás arrived in Chicago, with the intention of remaining there for a year, as chaplain of Woodlawn Residence, near the University of Chicago.

Fr. Porrás, whom young people would soon begin to call “Fr. Bill,” was the second priest of Opus Dei to arrive in the U.S. The first was Fr. Joseph Muzquiz, who had been in Chicago since 1949, and who described the visit he made to introduce the new arrival to the Archbishop, Samuel Cardinal Stritch: “We visited the Cardinal and I presented the petition for faculties,

which he granted for a year. He was gracious, and he liked having another priest, who besides had a Ph.D. in history”[\[43\]](#).

A year later, Fr. Porrás moved to Boston, and in September of 1952, he met for the first time with Archbishop Cushing. At that interview, he told the Archbishop about the project of establishing a residence for university students in the city: Trimount House[\[44\]](#).

### *c. Opus Dei in the Archdiocese of Boston – Trimount House*

Opus Dei had begun its activities in the United States in February of 1949, with the arrival in the country of Fr. Joseph Muzquiz and three lay members, who had the intention of settling in Chicago[\[45\]](#). While still in the air, Fr. Muzquiz wrote to the Founder: “We are arriving. In a few minutes we will be landing in New York. (...) A little while ago we were over Boston. We saw Harvard University – a painting of it is in the dining room in Molinoviejo – and we have prayed to its Guardian Angel and to the Angels of all its inhabitants”[\[46\]](#). Two years later, Fr. Muzquiz suggested to Archbishop Cushing that Opus Dei might begin its apostolic work in the Archdiocese.

It wasn’t the first time that the topic of Opus Dei was mentioned in Boston. Five years earlier, the Spanish Physicist José María González Barredo, who spent six months working at M.I.T., had the opportunity of explaining Opus Dei to the Archbishop’s secretary[\[47\]](#).

Now, in January of 1951, the Archbishop was receptive to Fr. Muzquiz’s message. “He said he was open to ‘anything that would work for the sanctification of lay people’ and that the door was wide open for speaking to people, since many persons ‘wanted to know about these things’”[\[48\]](#).

After meeting Archbishop Cushing, and on his advice, Fr. Muzquiz spoke at length with the rector of St. John’s Seminary, Msgr. Thomas J. Riley. “I had a long conversation with the Rector and I think he understood quite well. The next day he told me that he had spent a half hour with the Archbishop and that, although no additional institutes were admitted in the diocese, he tried to convince the Archbishop that our work is ‘unique’ and very necessary. They were thinking specifically about Harvard, the most prestigious university in America, where the only Catholic group was unfortunately the St. Benedict Center, which continued to oppose the hierarchy of the Church, and the Archbishop had excommunicated those who attended their activities[\[49\]](#). As we have seen, the excommunication from Rome arrived some two years later.

In the summer of the same year, Archbishop Cushing traveled to Santiago de Compostela, in Spain, and was able to visit La Estila, a residence for students that Opus Dei had established in that city[\[50\]](#). Toward the end of the year, Archbishop Cushing granted permission for Opus

Dei to establish its first center in the Archdiocese. It consisted of a small apartment on Commonwealth Ave., where two Spanish scientists – Santiago Polo and Luis Garrido, came to live while pursuing their studies at Harvard University[51].

During the following months, Fr. Muzquiz continued to meet with Archbishop Cushing in Boston. In February of 1952, he was invited by Msgr. Lawrence Riley, secretary to the Archbishop but also chaplain of the Harvard Catholic Club, to give a series of talks about “Sanctifying One’s Professional Work”. On that occasion, he also visited the Archbishop, who once more expressed his support for the establishment of a residence for students[52].

As we have already noted, Fr. Porrás also took up the subject of a student residence in his first meeting with Archbishop Cushing, in September of 1952. The Archbishop told him that at the moment he could not offer them financial support, but that he hoped to be able to do so in the future. Fr. Porrás commented that the Archbishop told him that “a great amount of good work is being done in the Archdiocese, but that there are many people whom we will be able to reach, with whom nothing is being done at the moment. (...) ‘Really, he said, I don’t know much about the Work, I only visited one of your houses in Spain, but I am with you one hundred per cent’”[53].

In May of 1953, Fr. Porrás moved to Boston, residing in a small apartment on Commonwealth Avenue with Polo and Garrido, the two physicists who were already working at Harvard. A few months later, they purchased two adjoining properties at 22 and 24 Marlborough St. in Back Bay, with the intention of establishing a student residence. That same month, Archbishop Cushing gave his permission for a chapel to be installed[54].

Trimount House, as it came to be called, was still in the process of being remodeled and decorated when it began its operation at the beginning of the academic year 1953-54, with a small group of students. An item in the *Boston Post*, published in February of 1954, mentioned that there were 14 students in residence, both Catholics and Protestants, from a variety of racial backgrounds. The article continued: “The Opus Dei house is set up nicely, with a homelike atmosphere”, and included an interview with Fr. Porrás, and also with Luis Garrido, who was working toward a Ph.D. in Physics.

These statements, which appeared in print at the time, give an idea of the goals that Opus Dei was setting as it undertook the *unique* apostolate described by the Archbishop, as well as the long-range view of the future Harvard chaplain. “The purpose of Opus Dei is two-fold, a way of life approaching perfection for its members that can be demonstrated in the ordinary walks of life, and sanctuary for students of every race and creed during the period of their professional studies, a normal home for the years while they must be away from their own homes”. (...) “Said one of them, a young Spaniard studying physics at Harvard. ‘The end of Opus Dei is the sanctification of the members’”. And Father Porrás added: “We are concerned

with the adverse influences when our students go to non-Catholic universities. We want to provide students with a place where they can lead a pleasant and decent life, a place for their development professionally and spiritually, no matter what their creed may be. By being better men, they can be better citizens. You can't go against things which are very negative. You have to give them something positive. I think that many times in this country we go at things too negatively". The article ended up by saying: "Trimount House, which already has Archbishop Cushing's approval and encouragement, will receive his formal blessing early this spring"[\[55\]](#).

In June of 1954, at the end of the first academic year that Trimount House was in operation, Fr. Porrás met once more with Archbishop Cushing. "I told him that we were very pleased with the development we are seeing. I told him about the days of recollection we have organized and also about the young man from Harvard who made his First Communion. For the first time, he asked me to sit down". He went on to explain that the only problems that they were having were financial, since they did not have the money to continue remodeling the house and were now thinking about taking out another mortgage. The Archbishop advised him not to incur any further debts, and promised him a grant of \$5,000, with a view to further assistance in the fall[\[56\]](#).

In October of 1954, after a delay of some months with respect to the original plan, Archbishop Cushing came to bless the chapel of Trimount House, and to take part in the official opening of the residence. During this event, the Archbishop commented, "I met Opus Dei some years ago, in the residence in Santiago de Compostela. I was so impressed that I began to foster a hope that Opus Dei would come to Boston... There is a urgent need for the Work here in America. I am very grateful for the help you have given, and I expect you will continue helping"[\[57\]](#).

It was some three years since Archbishop Cushing had begun his contact with Opus Dei. During that time, he had kept in touch on a regular basis with Fr. Muzquiz and Fr. Porrás, and was aware of the activities they had been organizing with college students in the Archdiocese. He had also received a positive report on these activities from the Rector of St. John's Seminary, Msgr. Thomas J Riley, in whom he had full confidence. As a consequence, when two influential Catholic laywomen, Mrs. McManus and Mrs. Fitzgerald, who had helped set up Trimount House, suggested to the Archbishop that he name Fr. Porrás Harvard chaplain, he agreed to do so on the spot[\[58\]](#). Thus, as was noted earlier in these pages, it was during the inauguration of the residence that the Archbishop proposed to Fr. Porrás that he take over the chaplaincy[\[59\]](#). Taking into account the recent crisis provoked by the St. Benedict Center, one can conclude that Archbishop Cushing had found a priest who could resolve the problem involving the Harvard Catholic Club.

A few days later, Fr. Muzquiz, who had come from Chicago for the inauguration of Trimount House, wrote about the Harvard Catholic Club to the Founder of Opus Dei: "The Archbishop

told us, 'You people should take it over'. You should take care of it and make sure students come to the residence. Right now they don't have any place to gather, and the present chaplain lives 30 miles away and can't take care of them". Fr. Muzquiz continued: "He wanted a priest of the Work (Guillermo, who is in Boston) to be the chaplain and said he would talk with the present chaplain (who apparently wants to leave the position, since he is now the President at a college), so that the two of them can get together"[\[60\]](#).

## **2. THE NEW CHAPLAIN'S VISION, DEDICATION AND PRIORITIES**

Fr. Porras set to work immediately. During his first year as chaplain, he had four meetings with Archbishop Cushing in which he informed him about his projects and sought his advice. He kept up this same rhythm of appointments throughout the following years[\[61\]](#).

In the first report that he sent to the Archbishop on his chaplaincy he said: "I have always considered that this chaplaincy extended to all the Catholics students at Harvard, whether or not they were members of the Harvard Catholic Club which I have taken to be the instrument through which the work can be carried out"[\[62\]](#).

The new chaplain understood that his mission consisted primarily in mobilizing small groups of students and forming them spiritually and intellectually so that they would be able to positively influence Catholics and non Catholics at the University[\[63\]](#). "We were trying to work with small groups (a Seminar for Freshmen and Sophomores, another for Juniors and Seniors), a monthly D/R [day of recollection]; that (it) is not possible to contact personally the 400 Catholic Students here so it is our idea to work steadily with small groups and (get them) to do something for them". Cushing supported the new chaplain's vision. "He said -Fr. Porras noted in reference to the Archbishop- the idea of small groups is very good. The Club has been run like a Holy Name Society trying to get everybody there which is impossible and has failed. Small groups of lay apostolates may work"[\[64\]](#). In this way, Fr. Porras avoided appearing like the representative of Catholics at Harvard and fostered the sense of responsibility of the laity in the task of making Catholicism present on campus.

It seems that Fr. Porras was able to transmit this vision to some members of the Harvard Catholic Club. This can be seen in an article: "Lay apostolate on the secular campus", that Robert Derro, one of the members, published in the Harvard Catholic Club magazine two years after the new chaplain arrived: "There is on the campus today a great opportunity for the development and practice of this type of active faith. (...) The results of lay apostolate, although often not noticeable, are certainly the most effective"[\[65\]](#). Another sign of the fact that this call to the lay apostolate was well received at Harvard and also at MIT was the 20 or so persons who throughout those years decided to join Opus Dei[\[66\]](#).

The vision of the new chaplain can also be seen a year after he arrived there in a letter sent to Fr. John McCabe, an American priest who was doing his doctoral thesis in Rome on “The danger of non-Catholic colleges for Catholic students”[\[67\]](#). “I believe –Fr. Porras wrote to Fr. McCabe- that secular colleges are fertile field of apostolate for true Catholic young men and women. There is always a number of converts (and also a number of vocations). The danger is to have Catholics with very little formation come here; they are influenced by the environment instead of being an influence on it. The solution as I see it and try to give it, is to help toward their spiritual development, encourage their apostolate, make them active Catholics; then if they get into trouble they have adequate means to overcome it. Any Catholic is apt to lose his faith if he lacks spirituality and lives in a non-Catholic environment, whether it be a college, an office or digging ditches”[\[68\]](#). This comment emphasizes Fr. Porras’ position with regard to the positive way to confront the process of secularization and the perspective he had in his efforts as chaplain at Harvard Catholic Club.

On the other hand, Fr. William Porras had not moved to Boston to become the Catholic Chaplain at Harvard. He was the only priest of Opus Dei in that area and he frequently had to visit other cities, including Chicago. Nevertheless he did devote a substantial portion of his time to the Harvard chaplaincy. He and the authorities of Opus Dei understood that this work was a way of helping the Boston diocese but also a way to foster the mission of Opus Dei, an institution young in the Church at that time. Four months after beginning that work, he wrote to Rome: “The young people at Harvard make for a lot of work but this is a very important apostolate”[\[69\]](#). And at the end of his first year as chaplain, he wrote to Fr. Muzquiz who directed Opus Dei in the U.S. from Chicago: “For the next couples of weeks I will be pretty well tied up with the Club. We are having elections Thursday and so have a lot of unfinished business to take care of now and when we get the new officers we’ll have to do all the planning for the Fall term before they leave for vacations”[\[70\]](#).

In addition, he soon established a regular schedule to receive students personally. Fr. Porras explained to the Archbishop that he had set up fixed hours: “one evening and two afternoons per week, leaving me sufficient time to arrange appointments at other hours that may be more convenient to some of the students”[\[71\]](#). In the various bulletins and other publications of the HCC, when there was a schedule of the office hours of the chaplain, it also stated that he could always be reached in his residence and it gave the address and phone number[\[72\]](#). In the Newsletter of HCC one could also read: “It might interest Latin-American students to know that Father Porras speaks Spanish fluently”[\[73\]](#). It is possible to calculate that in those years Fr. Porras dedicated some ten hours every week to the care of the students. Besides, from 1957 onward he began to dedicate three or four fixed hours to MIT and from 1958 on he dedicated the same amount of time to the students at Harvard Business School. Besides attending personally to the students one would have to add the time he devoted to arranging and participating in other activities that were growing rapidly in those first years. When it came to organizing activities his policy was to encourage the Catholic students themselves to organize and participate in them, but this did not mean that he was completely on the side

line. “It is my experience in this short time that they not only need guidance but also pushing, as they are apt to leave everything for the last minute”[\[74\]](#).

The vision of the new chaplain can be summed up in the following list of priorities: a) see to it that the Catholic chaplain was “one more person” at Harvard; b) arrange to have a place where he could begin to work; c) create a new more participative, open and inclusive legal setting for the HCC; d) work toward increasing the number of members of the HCC; e) see to it that the HCC and its activities were better known among all the members of the academic community; f) set up a spiritual program that would promote holiness and apostolate and g) promote a cultural program with a strong philosophical and theological content. These were his priorities, ever present throughout his six years as chaplain (1954-1960).

### *a. One more person at Harvard*

Fr. Porras began his work as chaplain just barely three years after he has defended his doctoral thesis in history and his priestly ordination. At that time, he has 34 years old and practically his whole adult life had been lived in a secular university environment, both in Mexico and in Spain. Consequently, Fr. Porras considered it natural to enter into the life at Harvard. He wanted the Catholic chaplain at Harvard to be considered an insider rather than an outsider.

As a consequence, he soon appeared as one more among the chaplains at Harvard. He immediately got in touch with the then president of the United Ministry to Students, a Presbyterian. Porras described him as a “good man, hardworking and well informed”, and he noted that he “offered him an office close to the chapel and even a room in the same building where he could have an oratory”[\[75\]](#). In the end, there was no need for those rooms since he had already found rooms in Philips Brook House (PBH). Fr. Porras submitted the petition to use those rooms both in PBH as later in the Harvard Business School with the idea that they could be used by all the Harvard chaplains[\[76\]](#).

Just as Fr. Green had done in the 1930's, Fr. Porras began to attend the meeting of the “United Ministry to Students” which were held periodically in University Hall. As he himself explained to the Archbishop: “This is not an inter-faith group nor is it their purpose to discuss religious matters. Their object is work together in helping the students at Harvard, their one bond in common”[\[77\]](#). At that time, Harvard had 12 chaplains belonging to different Protestant denominations and one rabbi. Each year one of them was chosen to be president. “Given the nature of this organization -Fr. Porras continued- it is not possible for the Catholic chaplain to be a member. But since it is focused on purely university matters, one can attend the meetings that are held twice a month.” And in 1957 he wrote: “They have been insisting for two years now in my presiding over the group but they understand that is impossible”[\[78\]](#).



In 1956 the United Ministry to Students decided to invite a Catholic to speak before the United Students Forum. At the suggestion of Fr. Porras, Bishop Wright of Worcester spoke about “The Virtue of Hope” and was very well received<sup>[79]</sup>.

At the same time, Fr. Porras established ties with the college administrators. “Little by little, I got to know and deal with the deans and directors of the dorms... These ties resulted to the benefit of the students since there were some problems that I was able to speak with the dean about and that worked out well. They also invited me to be a part of a commission that met weekly to discuss the concrete problems of the students. That was good because in many cases the students ask for -and respect- the chaplain’s opinion”<sup>[80]</sup>. “Other university authorities also contacted –as he informed the Archbishop- have been: the Dean of the College, of Students and of Freshmen, the Registrar, House Masters, Seniors Tutors, Freshmen Proctors, and also doctors on the staff in the Hygiene Department.” As Fr. Porras would say: all those who work with the students and others “have been very available”<sup>[81]</sup>.

On their part, the administrators at Harvard could count on Fr. Porras. And so, for example, in April, 1958, the Office of the University Marshal asked him to get together with a group of Ecuadorian students. Later, he was asked to meet with Fr. Gustave Ermecke, a well-known Catholic moral theologian and rector of the Catholic University of Padreborn, in Germany<sup>[82]</sup>. In March, 1960, Eric Culter of the Admission and Scholarship committee asked for his help in getting Stanley G. Mathews, the director of a Catholic school, to support one of his students who was applying to Harvard. That matter failed but the episode is interesting because it shows that Fr. Porras was convinced that a Catholic could study at Harvard without problems for his faith<sup>[83]</sup>.

The active presence of Fr. Porras at Harvard made it easier for the HCC to be integrated into the Newman Club Federation. It already belonged to the Newman Club province, but it had not become an active member until Fr. Porras’ chaplaincy. In one of his notes he explains that “I arranged things with [the] Dean so it could join the federation and at the same time follow the policy of Harvard in these matters. Since then the Harvard students have published Newman and I have encouraged them to take more interest in the matters of the province. We in fact, gave a National President and a Chairman of the province and we hosted a Province Congress while I was there”<sup>[84]</sup>.

The final words at the end of the last report he wrote about his chaplaincy can be considered the best explanation of the integration he had obtained by 1960: “In closing I would like to say that this year the work at Harvard has reached a peak: there is increasing interest and response on the part of the students, and friendly and generous cooperation on the part of the University authorities and members of the Faculty and of the Hygiene Department, and excellent understanding with the members of the United Ministry to Students. I have been very happy to work with the Dominican Fathers and the Jesuit Fathers all of whom have sacrificed their own personal interests, I am sure, in behalf of the students; and I am most

grateful to the priests at St. Paul's Parish, especially to Monsignor Hickey and Father Collins, for the time and interest and effort they have spent in this work. This certainly does not mean that everything has been accomplished. With God's grace, I am sure much more can be done"[\[85\]](#).

### ***b. An office for the HCC but not a Catholic Center at Harvard***

Hardly a month after his appointment as chaplain, Fr. Porras, referring to a meeting that he has just had with the Archbishop of Boston, noted: "Definitely not interested in having a house for the Club"[\[86\]](#). It seems clear that, for Cushing, the moment has not yet arrived to consider once again the question of the Catholic Center at Harvard. Nonetheless, Fr. Porras thought it was necessary to have a locale, even a small setting, where the chaplain could meet with students and where the staff of the Club could carry on their work. That is why he asked permission to use some rooms in Philips Brooks House[\[87\]](#).

In June, 1955, the HCC was informed that the Faculty Philips Brooks House Committees had voted favorably to allow the use of an office for all the members of Harvard (and Radcliffe) "religious organizations" and that it would be available in September[\[88\]](#).

In this way, the HCC returned to Phillips Brooks House after a gap of almost twenty years and once again had a locale. Even though it was quite small, it was furnished and had a university phone number. With time, other activities -the celebration of Mass, and occasional seminars- would also take place there. But for the majority of its activities, HCC would need larger spaces. They habitually used the Lamont Forum Room in Lamont Library.

The absence of a Catholic Center was constantly felt. That is why in spite of the initial negative view of the Archbishop, the question of the Catholic Center came up again twice more during Fr. Porras' chaplaincy.

The first time was during the 1955-56 academic year, the second of Fr. Porras' chaplaincy. In February 1956, Fr. Porras commented to the Archbishop that a property near Harvard that the diocese had acquired and had destined to the Armenian Church could very well have served the HCC. The Archbishop responded that it was "a shame that we did not keep that property," and added that "it would be possible to get Kennedy interested in a project like that and ask him for \$100,000 for a center but he himself [Cushing] would have to carry it out"[\[89\]](#). After this conversation, Fr. Porras was convinced that the Archbishop "is interested in obtaining a building for the students at Harvard, something that previously he did not consider necessary"[\[90\]](#).

In view of these positive signs, the executive committee of the HCC once again brought up the matter with the Archbishop in April of 1956[\[91\]](#). And in May, the Alumni Council decided to

create a committee that would study the possibility of purchasing a building for the HCC. The committee was made up of Fr. Porras, Thomas Barrette, Thomas O'Connor and David Herlihy[92]. But after the summer, the matter was dropped. The Alumni Council decided in October 1956 that it was more urgent to concentrate their efforts on another project that HCC was pushing: the establishment of a Chair of Catholic Studies at Harvard[93].

The second attempt to set up the Catholic Center came about a year later and was the initiative of the then president of HCC: James E. Manahan. In May 1957 Manahan saw that the matter of the Chair was pretty well defined and he thus thought the moment had arrived to reactivate the project. Consequently, he sent a petition to the Archbishop accompanied by a "Report on the Proposed Harvard Catholic Center"[94]. Manahan explained that this report had been drawn up after a year's work and referenced the rumors that were circulating about the future of St. Paul's parish: "I understand that there has been talk of converting St. Paul's Church into a student Church and Center if and when the parish becomes too small to support itself"[95].

The diminishing Catholic population at St. Paul's, due to the urban expansion of Harvard in that area, and the consequently financial difficulties (of the parish) were clear to all. But even though Cushing had for some time considered that the HCC could lean more on the parish, he was not thinking about suppressing it. In a conversation with Porras, Cushing had said: "I have been thinking that you could use St. Paul more in the future. This parish is disappearing and Hickey is getting older. He is going to celebrate his 50th anniversary this year. He will never do anything for Harvard. He is a good man but too centered on the parish and not on the diocese"[96].

Consequently Cushing responded to Manahan, supporting the idea of the Catholic Center at the same time that he clearly expressed his ideas for the future of St. Paul's parish: "No reference belongs in these plans to St. Paul's Church for the simple reason that this project should be something independent of the Church"[97]. In spite of the urban changes around Harvard Square, Cushing clearly saw that the parish should continue.

On his part, Fr. Porras also offered his words of approval for Manahan's project. "Your report is highly recommendable. Let us hope and pray that the project will become a reality soon. It would certainly be the satisfaction of the dreams of many generations at Harvard, and certainly of those of us who have battled with many difficulties arising from the lack of a proper set-up day after day and year after year"[98].

At the same time, Chaplain Porras told Manahan about his doubts that setting up the Catholic Center would, of itself, assure a greater knowledge and appreciation for Catholicism at Harvard, especially among non-Catholics. "To my mind further recognition can only be gained through the personal apostolate of the Catholic leaders and the Catholic students at

Harvard; for this we need a better prepared laity, well informed Catholics. The center would, of course, be a great instrument in reaching or instructing our own people”[\[99\]](#).

At the beginning of the academic year 57-58, Manahan’s project was still alive even though there were signs that the Archdiocese did not appear to be interested in going ahead with it. Thus, for example, in October, the HCC invited the Archbishop’s secretary and former chaplain of the Club, Msgr. Riley, to the annual reunion of the Harvard Catholic Club Council, which would consider a “discussion of plans for a Catholic Center at Harvard”[\[100\]](#). The secretary sent a thank you note for the invitation but said that he could not be present[\[101\]](#). In effect, the project of the Catholic Center did not go ahead and for the next two years, neither Fr. Porras nor other officers of the HCC made efforts to pursue it[\[102\]](#).

The question of the Catholic Center came up again in the spring of 1959. Cushing communicated to Porras: “we will have to wait (...) before doing something definitive with Harvard.” Fr. Porras wrote down that, according to the Archbishop, “this is a matter of naming another pastor who would be interested in the work with students (He asks me if I know such a person). Then construct a center where Catholics can gather and where I could live, he told me. I don’t want to have a center with a chapel; they should use the parish”[\[103\]](#).

At the end of the 1950’s Cardinal Cushing leaned once again toward integrating more the HCC in St. Paul parish. The ties between the two had grown weaker over the years due, in part, to the lack of interest on the part of Fr. Hickey and on the other hand, because there had been three chaplains: Riley, McQuade and Porras, without any formal linkage to the parish.

Fr. Porras had maintained contact with St. Paul during the years when he was chaplain. “We maintain frequent contact with the pastor at St. Paul,” he wrote. “I visit him often and comment (on) our plans and projects and the progress we are making. (...) We invite him to celebrate the Mass for the beginning of the academic year and he preaches and attends some of the activities.” But, he concluded, “He always considers Harvard a dangerous and sterile terrain”[\[104\]](#).

In any case, the project of a Catholic Center at Harvard had failed once again.

### ***c. New Constitution and new by-Laws for the HCC***

The exchange of ideas between Fr. Porras and Manahan about the project of a Catholic Center reveal that the chaplain’s vision on the way to present Catholicism at Harvard gave priority to persons -their formation and motivation- over buildings. “To my mind further recognition can only be gained through the personal apostolate of the Catholic leaders and the Catholic students at Harvard; for this we need a better prepared laity, well informed

Catholics. The center would, of course, be a great instrument in reaching or instructing our own people”[\[105\]](#).

In this vein and in keeping with his juridical background, Fr. Porrás tried to endow the HCC with a legal framework that would reflect this vision. It was not primarily a matter of changing the legal documents, but of giving a new focus and structure to the Club, a focus and structure that reflected a greater openness. As he informed Archbishop Cushing: “I drafted a new Constitution and by-Laws both of which were accepted by the officers and were adopted by vote of the membership”[\[106\]](#). The new Constitution and the new by-laws - promulgated in the spring of 1955 and revised and emended in the spring of 1956- expressed the chaplain’s idea of converting the HCC into an instrument to reach first of all the Catholics at Harvard and then the greatest possible number of non-Catholics.

The new Constitution began with the words: “PURPOSE: The purpose of the Organization shall be to bring Catholics of Harvard University into closer relationship with one another and with other students, to foster the religious and cultural development of its members, and to spread better understanding of the Catholic religion at Harvard”[\[107\]](#).

Four principles articulate the new norms: participation, openness, continuity and capillary action.

Participation, more than simply efficiency, seemed to be the reason that led Fr. Porrás to reform the previous legal framework. For he wrote the Archbishop: “These provided for only President, Vice President, Secretary, Publicity Director and Treasurer who had to conduct all the business of the Club. It was not only impossible for them to do all the work efficiently but it also excluded a number of members who were desirous to take part in running their organization”[\[108\]](#).

The new organization added three permanent committees, together with the already existing Executive Committee, of which the Chaplain formed a part. These were: Publicity Committee, Activities Committee and Membership Committee. Each of them was composed of 10-12 members[\[109\]](#). With this new structure there were some 40 persons engaged in the running of the HCC.

At the same time, this reform of Fr. Porrás tended toward openness. “Except for a few business meetings to which only the members are called, all of the activities are opened to all the Catholics students in the university and some are held for the University community at large”[\[110\]](#). This also created new categories of members, making room for non-Catholics who according to the new By-laws could form part of the HCC as Associated Members. Likewise, Faculty and Alumni could become Honorary Members.

In order to take advantage of the experience of the previous generations and to give solidity and continuity to the HCC, Fr. Porras undertook one of the most significant legal changes: the creation of the Harvard Catholic Club Council. This new organism was made up of “honorary chaplains, faculty advisors, and past officers”[\[111\]](#). Its mission -without having binding value- was to advise the Executive Committee in its tasks. In this way, according to Fr. Porras’ vision one could take advantage of a rich experience which in any other way would quickly be lost because of the rapid succession of the members of the HCC, something characteristic of academic life.

The first meeting of the Harvard Catholic Club Council took place on May 29, 1956. The Council decided to work on two projects: a “Plan for the establishment of a University Chair in Catholic Theology or Philosophy” and “The possibility of a permanent building for the Club”[\[112\]](#). We have earlier noted the failure of the plan for a Catholic Center. The first project: the Chair, was successful and as we will discuss later. The Harvard Catholic Club Council progressed and grew stronger with the years and in 1960, a reform of the Constitutions foresaw that in the future it would be regulated by its own norms[\[113\]](#).

#### *d. Members and finances*

The reform of the statutes carried out by Fr. Porras above all with respect to increasing the categories of members and an openness in most of the activities to non- members, made the HCC anything but a closed, elitist association. In fact, for some people, the very concept of member had lost its relevance[\[114\]](#).

This real risk, something that Fr. Porras had in a way sought, did not keep him from seeking to increase the number of members by means of capillary action. Among other means the new juridical structure allowed for a Membership Committee and the possibility of committees in each House at Harvard and the dorms for the freshmen[\[115\]](#). At the same time, an effort was made to obtain members from among the graduate students.

This effort was successful. The figures that Fr. Porras sent to the Archbishop show a growing number of members between 1954 and 1960. Counting only undergrads the year '54-'55 began with 89 members and ended up with 156[\[116\]](#); the year '55-'56 concluded with 205[\[117\]](#); the year '56-'57 with 220[\[118\]](#); the year '57-'58 with 225[\[119\]](#); the year '58-'59 with 239[\[120\]](#); and the year '59-'60 with 289[\[121\]](#). During these years the number of Catholics at Harvard oscillated between 481 and 516, so the HCC grew from 20% of the total number of Catholics in 1954 to 56% in 1960.

The students in the Graduate School of Arts and Science, less traditionally active in the HCC, also increased from 27 members of a total of 160 Catholics in 1958, to 53 of a total of 159 in 1960[\[122\]](#).

The increase in the number of members in HCC helped the finances of the Club that were always rather shaky financial. From the beginning, Fr. Porrás had decided on “the policy of not seeking any financial profit from the religious activities but (to) try only to cover expenses”[\[123\]](#). He had also decided to lower the fees in order to increase the numbers incorporated into the HCC.

During the first period when Fr. Porrás was chaplain, the HCC income amounted to \$449.61 (\$312 of which came from fees paid by the members). In the final year that had increased to \$2,834.21 (\$450.00 of which came from fees of the members; \$869 from donations and \$1,393.65 from the *Registration mixer*). As Fr. Porrás himself explained: “The registration mixer is a social. This has become the main source of income and has enabled the Club to hold some of its functions with no charge for the members in order to encourage membership”[\[124\]](#).

Most of the expenses of the HCC during these years were for publicity: announcements in the “Current” and the “Crimson”; Posters for the bulletin boards, and post-cards and letters sent out which would allow all the Catholics to know about the activities organized by the Club.

The second most expensive item was expenses for the invited speakers who were a help enriching the cultural program of those years[\[125\]](#).

To cover these various expenses, Fr. Porrás encouraged donations, as can be seen in a note from 1957: “The activities of the Club have begun well. We received \$900 from the registration dance and a \$1,000 donation for conferences, so it seems possible to do quite a lot this year”[\[126\]](#).

There was also an attempt to get in touch with alumni and build up a network with them. “I have been trying to rebuild the files of the Club and would appreciate any information you may give me on your term of office, I.E. (...) Do you have any mementos of interest to the Club that you would care to donate (programs, announcements, etc.)”[\[127\]](#). In his report to the Archbishop on the year '59-'60 he makes reference to some of the results in this area: “Three alumni, all past officers of the Catholic Club, in the Boston area have been specially interested and active this year; they are Leo V. Zavatore of Quincy, William F. Looney, Jr. of Arlington, and David Herlihy of Roslindale.” He explained that they had gotten together from time to time to advise the present officers. And they had thought about having an annual fundraiser to support *Current*, the *Newman Lectures* and the annual retreat[\[128\]](#). We will discuss all these initiatives in the following pages.

### ***e. From “Harvard Catholic Club Newsletter” to “The Current”***

The new chaplain wanted to give greater visibility to the activities organized by the HCC by publishing a very modest *Newsletter* of a few pages starting in 1955 n 1956, it changed its name to *Current*. During the next few years it gradually grew in size and quality and in 1959 it became a magazine. In 1961 it changed names to *The Current*[\[129\]](#).

In June of 1955, Fr. Porras wrote to one of the officers of HCC: “(We) are moving our plan for the newsletter.” He expected the first issue to be ready for the beginning of the following semester[\[130\]](#).

The first issue of the *Newsletter* appeared in October 1955. It was a very simple monthly six page publication, produced on a mimeograph machine. The publisher was PBH and Jim Manahan, then secretary of the HCC, was the editor. In the following months the number of members of the Editorial Board kept on growing.

During its first and only year of existence the *Newsletter* came out punctually. It offered information about the organization of the HCC: the list of the officers with their telephone numbers and the office hours for Fr. Porras in PBH. In addition, each issue included the calendar of events for the month, presentation of the upcoming speakers and news about the activities that had already taken place. Some issues also included brief essays with titles like: “The vocation of Jacques Maritain”, “Graham Greene”, “Integration” and also book reviews. “Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man”, by James Joyce, was reviewed in November of 1955[\[131\]](#). Another section of the *Newsletter* was the “Catholic of the month,” a brief biography of the person chosen for this honor by the HCC. Among such figures who appeared in this period were Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, and the Democratic governor of Ohio, James M. Cox[\[132\]](#).

In October,1956 the *Newsletter* while maintaining its same format and content, was given a new name: “Current.” Beginning in December of 1956 the cover bore also the recently created shield of the HCC, with the motto: “Fides et Scientia.” This was the format followed for three years, i.e. until October 1959. Fr. Porras informed the Archbishop about these improvements: “‘Current’ is the monthly publication of the Club, first started three years ago, which is mailed free of charge to all the Catholics at Harvard and some parents and alumni (subscriptions are offered to these at 2.00 a year). One thousand copies are printed and mailed monthly at a cost of \$55 per month”[\[133\]](#).

October 1959 brought a new era for “Current.” The brief mimeographed bulletin was converted into a 20-page magazine with better design, better paper and better printing. Fr. Porras informed the Archbishop of all this, adding that for economic reasons they had only been able to publish two issues. He wrote: “We print 2,000 copies that are distributed gratis to all the Catholic students in all the student housing and to some parents and alumni”. “The Harvard Crimson gave considerable attention to the Current this year”[\[134\]](#). In the



presentation of the new publication it was made clear that it was not necessary to be Catholic to collaborate with "Current." "But the magazine as a whole will deal with current controversies and developments in a manner that is both Harvard and Catholic. These two traditions are not incompatible"[135].

With the new format, the number and scope of the contributions increased. Among the first issues there were for example articles by Cardinal Cushing: "In Sheep's Clothing," in which he criticized the recent visit of Khrushchev to the United States. This was followed by an article by one of the students: George Maloof '62, entitled: "Peace through Understanding" in which he criticized the critique of the Cardinal in the previous article. The issue of February-March 1960 included an article by Christopher Dawson: "A Challenge to American Catholics".

According to Fr. Porras, the staff of the new publication included two faculty, two graduate students and two undergrads[136]. The first name that appeared in the new Advisory Board was that of Rev. Joseph P. Collins, coadjutor at St. Paul and chaplain of Radcliffe Club. Michael Novak also appeared as a collaborator and literary editor in this new "Current." "The Current. A review of Catholicism and Contemporary Culture," under the auspices of the Harvard-Radcliffe Catholic Club and under the direction of Michael Novak, begins in 1961, after Fr. Porras had left the chaplaincy.

### *f. A spiritual program aimed at sanctity and apostolate*

One of the most characteristic features of the HCC since the time of its foundation was its spiritual program. Already in the early years of the 20th century there were frequent sermons and Benediction on the 3rd Friday of each month. These took place at St. Paul's, still at its first location. In the era of the Club House (1907-1925) there were Communion Sundays held four times a year. During the 1930's there were the *Annual Communion Breakfasts* with Mass at St. Paul and breakfast at *Harvard Union*. And then there were the Lenten lectures that were begun also in those years. At the beginning of the 1950's the program included an hour of adoration in the church of St. Clement and a dialogued Mass the fourth Thursday of each month; a retreat at the end of February; a solemn Mass at St. Paul at the beginning of every semester and the Communion Sunday on the fourth Sunday of each month. In addition, a small group participated in a dialogued Mass which was celebrated every Wednesday morning at St. Paul's[137].

When Fr. Porras took over the chaplaincy the program of spiritual activities continued most of these traditional practices: the solemn Mass and sermon at the beginning of the academic year which was celebrated by the Vicar General and the pastor of St. Paul in that parish; the annual retreat and *Communion Breakfast*.

In addition to these already habitual practices one could note four characteristic features. The first would be stress on the quest for holiness and apostolate. Fr. Porras treated all the

traditional Catholic practices in that prospective. As we have already seen, the chaplain of Harvard was convinced that the key to helping the lay Catholics exert a positive influence on the secular atmosphere rather than be swept along by it, was: “spiritual development, encourage their apostolate, make them active Catholics.”

For Fr. Porrás this spiritual development meant seeking Christian holiness, each one in his or her place. The students who came to the chaplain could frequently hear some ideas which he himself had heard directly from the Founder of Opus Dei: “Your duty is to sanctify yourself. Yes, even you. Who thinks that this task is only for priests and religious? To everyone, without exception, our Lord said: ‘Be ye perfect, as my heavenly Father is perfect’”[\[138\]](#). “An hour of study, for a modern apostle, is an hour of prayer”[\[139\]](#). “Student: form yourself in a solid and active piety, be outstanding in study, have a strong desire for the ‘professional’ apostolate. And with that vigor of your religious and professional training, I promise you rapid and far-reaching developments”[\[140\]](#). “You have got to be a ‘man of God’, a man of interior life, a man of prayer and sacrifice. Your apostolate must be the overflow of your life ‘within’”[\[141\]](#). “You laugh because I tell you that you have a ‘vocation for marriage’? Well, you have just that: a vocation”[\[142\]](#).

In the 1950’s it was not completely unusual to propose holiness to the laity as the way to carry out effectively the mission of the Church. In the years just before the Second Vatican Council, American Catholicism gave rise to a number of lay movements that aspired to a deeper spiritual life and a greater consistency between religion and daily life, along with a greater effort to imbue society with Christian principles. Those involved also hoped to share more fully in the Church’s mission. Examples of this “lay awakening” before the council include initiatives as diverse as *Commonweal* magazine; Dorothy Day’s Catholic Worker movement; the Young Christian Workers; the Christian Family Movement; the Grail[\[143\]](#). At the same time, these horizons, many of which were still in the line of Catholic Action, were far from being the common patrimony of Catholics. In fact, for many young Catholics at Harvard, to hear their chaplain say that they were called to strive for sanctity and to spread the Gospel, not in spite of being at Harvard, but precisely through their intellectual work and their professional relationships and their friendships on campus was certainly new and attractive[\[144\]](#).

Together with this general stress on holiness and apostolate, Fr. Porrás focused on three elements in his spiritual program: Mass at Harvard, personal spiritual direction and monthly days of recollection.

### *Mass at Harvard*

Even though the HCC was born without direct connection with St. Paul’s parish, it had promptly and logically entered into its orbit. St. Paul was converted into the natural locale

where a good number of the Catholics at Harvard attended Mass. It seems that this continued being the case during the years when Fr. Porras was chaplain there. Thus we read in an article published in 1960: “The Harvard students who are Catholics have their own chaplain, Fr. William Porras of Opus Dei, but many come also to St. Paul’s and at eight o’clock on Saturday mornings they assist at a dialogue Mass with ‘four degree’ participation. One of the students reads the epistle, another the gospel”[\[145\]](#).

At the same time, once he became chaplain, Fr. Porras showed great interest in offering the Catholic students at Harvard the possibility of attending the Mass on their campus[\[146\]](#).

By September 1955, after negotiating with the Archbishop, the pastor of St. Paul and the authorities at Harvard, Fr. Porras succeeded: “The Archbishop gave me permission to celebrate at Harvard. This is quite a victory because there has never been Mass there... For now it is only the case of celebrating there on the First Fridays but the Archbishop left it up to me to decide”[\[147\]](#).

Mass was to be held in a room at PBH. Hence, Fr. Porras’ words “there has never been Mass there” referred to the “old yard” at Harvard, not to the campus in general. In 1917, three days after having received his doctorate *honoris causa*, the then Cardinal of Boston, William H. O’Connell, had officiated a first Mass in Harvard Stadium[\[148\]](#).

The first Mass Fr. Porras celebrated on campus took place in October 1955. “Yesterday –the chaplain wrote with great satisfaction- we had the Mass at Harvard which I consider a terrific success – 75 communicants. The breakfast afterwards was a good chance to be with them”[\[149\]](#).

What the new chaplain did not accomplish was to hold the Mass in the University Chapel, *the Memorial Church*, situated in front of Widener Library. Fr. Porras had posed the question to the Archbishop in July 1956. Cushing offered some hope but it did not seem easy to him. “We had to send a report to the Apostolic Delegate about the chapels at MIT and Brandeis[\[150\]](#) - the Archbishop said- but get all the information you can about the matter and write me a letter with the data and we will see what can be done”[\[151\]](#). In August of 1956 Fr. Porras still had hope: “It was a Lutheran chapel and a Unitarian chapel, etc. But now it doesn’t belong to any Protestant group... We will have to clarify some details but I think we will get it”[\[152\]](#). In the end, his hopes did not bear fruit and Fr. Porras and the students had to settle for Mass that continued to be celebrated once a month in PBH.

### *Personal Spiritual Direction*

Fr. Porras was convinced that spiritual direction, such as he had experienced with St. Josemaría, was an indispensable help, and he dedicated a lot of effort to it. In offering that

spiritual accompaniment, he gave special importance to teaching people to pray<sup>[153]</sup>. During his first year at Harvard, he got together with students in different locations: his own quarters, in a car parked along the street or meeting them for dinner in their housing at Harvard (which turned out to be rather expensive for the chaplain). As we have seen, once the HCC had a room in PBH, the chaplain set up a schedule for meeting with students three afternoons a week. His notes are full of references to this. “The office hours have also turned out well, no crazy problems but on the contrary spiritual advice and confessions”<sup>[154]</sup>. “It is not unusual for non-Catholics to come also to ask the priest his opinion on problems that come up in class”<sup>[155]</sup>.

The time dedicated to this work soon proved to be insufficient. “Every year more students come to consult problems and for spiritual direction”<sup>[156]</sup>. “Office hours at Harvard are now proving to be insufficient. This year more and more fellows are coming for different things – including two for instructions. Maybe later on when we have another priest we can add another day”<sup>[157]</sup>.

From 1957 onwards, he also dedicated one afternoon a week to take care of the students at MIT and beginning in 1958 he began to do the same at Harvard Business School where he had also been able to get a fitting place<sup>[158]</sup>. At the end of 1958 he wrote: “Harvard is a busy place these days. I have scheduled office hours at the Business School this year for the first time in history. The Dean has given the Chaplains the use of a suite of rooms nicely located. There are 198 Catholics there this year”<sup>[159]</sup>.

Fr. Porras himself wrote about his work at the Harvard Business School: “These last few weeks we have seen the miracle of grace acting in these souls; especially in the students in the Business School”<sup>[160]</sup>.

Dennis Helming was one of the students who went to Fr. Porras for spiritual direction. He wrote: “Father Bill was an impressive man, owing to his age (34 in 1956), stolid appearance, discretion and authority. He heard me out without saying so much”<sup>[161]</sup>.

Fr. Porras was clearly aware that this work remained completely outside the statistics of the HCC. As he wrote to the Archbishop: “It is hardly possible to judge the degree of spirituality or of devotion by the statistics given above. Some of the students who come to me regularly for spiritual guidance, and some who are daily communicants, refuse to join the Catholic Club and any other form of organizations at Harvard”<sup>[162]</sup>. But the Archbishop seemed satisfied with the way Fr. Porras was acting: “You are doing things in the best way possible. Personal contact is the way to really get to know them and do more for them”<sup>[163]</sup>.

*Days of Recollection and Retreats*

Fr. Porras continued the practice of organizing weekend retreats once or twice a year. At the same time, from the beginning he incorporated monthly days of recollection that he began to organize at Trimount House the third Sunday of each month[164]. He had arranged a part of the house in such a way that this activity of the HCC would not interfere with the rhythm of the residence.

Regarding the impact of these activities we can consider two accounts. Carl Schmitt was then doing his doctorate in History at Harvard. He has left this report: “The retreat, in early February, was at Miramar, the Franciscan house in Duxbury. My roommate was Vince Solomita, a young architecture instructor. Father Bill’s first meditation made a strong impression on me. He pointed to the stained glass windows—a lineup of saints, none of them lay people”[165]. And Vince Solomita wrote to Fr. Porras: “This past weekend retreat has been for me a magnificent grace from God. From the first conference to the last your guidance, inspiration, and presence will remain with my memory for a long time to come, in my heart and soul forever”[166].

Fr. Porras wanted to offer days of recollection also for the professors. “There are 25 Catholics who occupy chairs or important posts at Harvard (a very small number taking into account that there are a total of 1,000 faculty). Some enjoy high standing like the dean of the School of Architecture. I have gotten to know them all. Some have come to the retreat that we organized last year or to one of the days of recollection. In both cases we have at least managed to have them get to know one another and develop friendships”[167].

### ***g. A cultural program with strong philosophical and theological content***

In Fr. Porras’ vision the cultural program at HCC had to be inseparably united to the spiritual one since the Christian Faith demands dialogue with reason and this dialogue ought to be carried on at the university level. This was also the desire of the Catholics at Harvard as can be seen, for example, in the words of Trudon written in 1950 describing the profile for a new chaplain at Harvard: “He must be eminently qualified to handle the intellectual problems of students on the university level”[168]. So on this point, Fr. Porras stressed the need for good philosophical and theological formation on the part of the laity to enter without complexes into constructive dialogue with a secularized culture.

In its beginnings the HCC celebrated gatherings with a prominent invited speaker every month and two conferences every year. The greater part of these activities were not directed only to Catholics but were open to the whole university. The rhythm and frequency of these cultural activities had varied throughout its history, oscillating between one to four events each month which could be conferences, seminars or courses of apologetics and doctrine[169].

During Fr. Porras' tenure, the cultural program grew like never before, very soon reaching the point of three events every week. These were organized in three different forms: 1. Seminars or lecture series, with the same presenter for an entire semester; 2. Lectures with a presenter -a priest or a layperson- from either Cambridge or Boston and the surrounding area; and 3. Lectures given by "big name" individuals who came from around the country. These last were held in large auditoriums. The lecture given by the English Jesuit Fr. D'Arcy in February 1957, was attended by 850 persons[170].

In Fr. Porras' view the priority was not the number of attendees but the quality of the presentations. No matter whether they were lay persons or clerics, what was important was that they were "outstanding intellectuals"[171]. Some names and some of the topics can give an idea of how Fr. Porras made his ambitions a reality[172].

The Seminars touched principally on questions of Philosophy, Theology and the Bible and were held in PBH during an entire semester. In February 1956, for example, Fr. James F. Redding, professor at Emmanuel College and an alumnus of the Harvard School of Education, conducted a seminar on philosophy. Redding was the author of *The Philosophic Modernism of Nicholas A. Berdyaev* (Boston, 1945) and *The Virtue of Prudence in the Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas* (New York, 1950). Before he began the seminar the secretary of the HCC contacted the head librarian at Lamont Library, informing him about the book they were going to use - Anton C. Pegis' translation of the *Summa contra Gentiles*- so that there might be sufficient copies available for the students[173].

Rev. Frederick McManus, educated at Catholic University of America and an important leader in the dialogue between Catholics and the Orthodox gave a seminar. Rev. J. Moriarty, S.J., an expert in Sacred Scripture dealt with questions like the "Kerygma," and "Dead Sea Scrolls," and "The Divinity of Christ." Fr. William Haas, O.P. from St. Stephen Priory in Dover gave a course on Thomistic Philosophy during three successive semesters: 1958-1959 and the first semester of 1959-1960. A large number of Catholics and non-Catholics attended.[174]. Fr. Haas had to discontinue the seminars because he was named President of Providence College[175]. Ref. Walter J. Furlong, Chancellor of the diocese conducted a series of conferences on Canon Law.

If we move on from the Seminars to the Conferences with local dignitaries, the list becomes much longer and we will only give some of the names. In 1955, Rev. Luke A. Farley spoke about matrimony. (In 1961 he would publish "Saints for the Modern Woman. A United Nations of Holiness for the Woman of Today".) The Rev. Matthew P. Stapleton who had been rector of St. John's Seminary, gave a series of conferences on the Bible. In November 1955, Dr. Roy Heffernan of Tufts University, spoke about "Doctors and Dogma". In March 1957, Felix Talbot, S.J. who later became a professor at Boston College, spoke about *Religion: On the American Plan*, commenting the book of Will Herberg: *Catholic, Protestant and Jew*. In February 1956, William Leonard, S.J., noted Jesuit theologian and writer, and founder and editor of the

Boston College Liturgy and Life Collection, spoke about “The Dignity of the Role of the Layman in the Church”. In that same month, the Rev. Henry P. Ouellette of Matignon High School, Cambridge, spoke on “Conscience and super-ego”. In October 1956, Dr. John Thomas Noonan, a young attorney and later professor of law and a federal judge, gave a conference entitled: “The Individual’s participation in Developing Natural Law”.

It is also possible to document the impact produced by some of these presentations, like that of Dr. John Doyle, who spoke on two different occasions about how “A Catholic Doctor Looks at Birth Control.” In March 1956 the president of the HCC sent him thanks in these words: “The majority of your audience was comprised of non-Catholics. And from their later remarks, I know that many of them went off with a different attitude towards the Church. (...) Thank you again for taking time from your busy schedule to explain the Church’s position on birth control”[\[176\]](#).

We could add other names to the list of local figures like those of Harvard Dean Jose Luis Sert, Francis Rogers and the former professor and writer Daniel Sargent.

The list of “big names” who were invited to Harvard by the HCC is also very long. We have already mentioned Martin D’Arcy, S.J. who had spent some time in Fordham. We could also cite Dr. Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, Austrian Catholic and social-political theorist who had spend some years in the USA during the Nazi domination. Rev. Father Henry V. Sattler was the Assistant Director of the Family Life Bureau, for the National Catholic Welfare Conference and the author of the book *Parents, Children and the Facts of Life: A Text on Sex Education for Christian Parents and for Those Concerned with Helping Parents*. He gave a conference on “The Challenge of Chastity,” After the conference, the Newsletter published a review which stated that “For a supposedly repressive subject, this talk presented a whole new outlook and stimulated a host of questions and discussion afterward”[\[177\]](#).

Thomas P. McTighe, Ph. D., professor of Philosophy in Georgetown University, spoke on “St. Thomas, Scholasticism and Modern Thought.” John Correia-Alfonso, S.J., a well-known Indian academic, spoke about “Hindu Spiritualism Today. Materialism and Modern India”.

Fr. John M. Osterreicher from the Institute of Judeo-Christian Studies, Seton Hall University, and editor of the magazine *The Bridge*, spoke about “The Heirs of Two Testaments.” Osterreicher, a leader in the movement for the reconciliation between Jews and Catholics and one of the architects of the Vatican II document: *Nostra Aetate*, wrote to Fr. Porras thanking him for the invitation: “I’m sure you realize how much I enjoyed my visit. The fact that I begged to be invited again shows how much I felt at home and how congenial I found the intellectual and spiritual climate of the club”[\[178\]](#).

Anne Fremantle, well-known writer about religion, entitled her conference: “The Holy and the Horrid: Promise and Performance in the Middle Ages”. Doctor Helen C. White, professor of the University of Wisconsin and the first woman to be elected president of the American Association of University Professors and of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), spoke about “The Student and His Religion”. And Charles B. Flood, noted writer, covered “The Current Literary Scene”.

A Harvard alumnus, John LaFarge, S.J. spoke on at least two occasions: “Why Be Social Minded?” and “Mature Faith in a Confused Year.” LaFarge also left his impressions in writing: “I enjoyed every moment of the visit. It was a very delightful experience, especially the talks with some of the men themselves. Let us hope that the brighter look that things have taken on recently may continue to grow. Best wishes to yourself and Father Porras”[\[179\]](#).

Other names included in Fr. Porras’ reports were Most Rev. John J. Wright and Dr. George M. Schuster. There are other names of persons who were invited but were unable to come because of problems in their schedules. These include: Mrs. Claire Booth Luce, US ambassador to Italy; Thomas E. Murray, of the United States Atomic Energy Commission; John Courtney Murray, S.J. and Walter Kerr of the N.Y. Herald Tribune.

Beginning in 1959, as Fr. Porras relates “a new development has been possible thanks to the help of Jesuit Fathers who are studying at Harvard. This consists in our so-called ‘Houses Meetings’ organized by the students living in each house” As the chaplain went on to explain some students would get together over dinner in the private dining room of their houses, with one of the Jesuit students who moderated their discussion about a topic of common interest”[\[180\]](#).

We conclude our review of the cultural program carried out during the chaplaincy of Fr. Porras by making reference to the *Communion Breakfast*. In reality this fitted into the religious, cultural and social programs because it consisted of a Mass at St. Paul’s and a breakfast afterwards with a talk by an invited guest at a nearby hotel. In Fr. Porras’ time they were held on the first Sundays of December.

In 1955 they tried in vain to invite Cardinal Spellman but instead they were able to host Hugh Stott Taylor, the David B. Jones Professor of Chemistry at Princeton University and Dean of the Graduate School. The Princeton Dean spoke about “American Catholics and Intellectual responsibilities” and about 250 persons attended[\[181\]](#). “He’s all for intellectual apostolate” wrote Fr. Porras[\[182\]](#). The invited guest for 1957 was the noted historian Msgr. John Tracy Ellis from the Catholic University of America. Another historian was the invited guest for 1958: Carlton J. H. Hayes, respected professor of History at Columbia University. Hayes, a convert, had been very active in the movement of lay Catholics in the ’20’s. He helped start the magazine *Commonweal* in 1924 and was the first Catholic co-chairman of the newly



formed National Conference of Christians and Jews in 1928. In the 1920's he had also encouraged the growth of research in Catholic Institutions of Higher Learning[183]. In 1959 the speaker was Fr. George Tavard, Augustinian, expert in the history of Theology, ecumenism and spirituality.

The names and topics that we have listed on these pages show the strong presence of Philosophy and Theology in the cultural program at the HCC during those years, but Literature, Law and History were not lacking.

Recounting the cultural contribution of the HCC during these years would not be complete without reference to the creation of the *Charles Chauncey Stillman Guest Professorship of Roman Catholics Studies*. It is true that this was entirely beyond the scope of the HCC. Nevertheless the HCC was a key factor in bringing it about.

### **3. THE CHARLES CHAUNCEY STILLMAN GUEST PROFESSORSHIP OF ROMAN CATHOLICS STUDIES. CHRISTOPHER DAWSON AT HARVARD**

The greater part of the available bibliography on the origin of the *Charles Chauncey Stillman Guest Professorship of Roman Catholics Studies* agrees in placing the HCC as one of its principal promoters[184]. But what cannot be appreciated in these publications is the role played by its chaplain, Fr. Porrás[185]. Here I am going to complete these accounts based on the documentation that I have been able to consult.

In March 1956 the HCC formally expressed to President Pusey its interest in promoting a Chair of Catholic Studies at Harvard[186]. In the archive of the Boston Diocese there is a letter that the President of Harvard sent to the president of the HCC on April 30, 1956 in which he said: "I shall hope to be in touch with you later about your proposal"[187].

Before receiving Pusey's response, Fr. Porrás and the Executive Committee of the HCC had visited the Archbishop to explain to him several projects, among which was "the possibility of establishing a chair of Catholic studies at Harvard. He very much liked all this," Fr. Porrás commented[188].

As we have seen after these first positive reactions on the part of the president of Harvard and of the Archbishop of Boston, the Alumni Council, the new institution created by Fr. Porrás, considered in its first session, May 1956, the "Plan for the establishment of a University Chair in Catholic Theology or Philosophy"[189].

During the summer of 1956, Fr. Porrás commented on the project to St. Josemaría in these terms: "In Harvard we have two big projects for which we almost have the approval of the

Archbishop and the university authorities. One is that of using the university chapel to offer Mass [As we have seen, that project never did go ahead.] The other project is further along and we only need the money to carry it out. This is the plan to set up a Chair of ‘Catholic thought.’ The hardest part here is to get the University to support it and we have already received that. This is a victory that will have repercussions all over the country because Harvard is the oldest and the model for many of the smaller universities. It won’t be hard to produce a chain reaction and see that others do something similar”[\[190\]](#).

After the summer, Horgan, the president of the HCC, wrote to the Archbishop: “President Pusey has recently written us that the Harvard Corporation would be desirous of helping the Harvard Catholic Club endow a chair of Catholic Theology in Harvard Divinity School”. He also explained to him that interested Catholics would have to provide the money -some \$400,000- and that they had organized a meeting to deal with the fund raising. Horgan ended his letter by writing: “It is our hope that we will be able to include you or your appointed representative in helping us form these plans”[\[191\]](#).

Cushing’s response arrived quickly from his secretary. In October, he let Horgan know that the Archbishop had no objection to their fund raising efforts for the chair at Harvard. But he did point out that, “his own extensive educational, cultural, and charitable program has assumed such proportions financially that (He) will be unable to make any contribution toward drives connected with any of the many non-sectarian colleges within the Archdiocese”[\[192\]](#).

It was clear that the Archbishop was not going to get financially involved in the project even though he did give it his blessing. During that same month of October 1956, Fr. Porras summed up the situation: “The H.C.C. has received a letter from + C [abbreviation used to refer to the Archbishop], authorizing the chair at Harvard... Dr. Rogers has been on this too through some alumni in New York who are in the \$5,000,000 budget, who are very intellectual. Two of them are coming to Boston to talk with him and me”[\[193\]](#).

According to Callahan, it was Francis Rogers, former Dean of the Graduate Faculty and advisor to the HCC, who set up contact with Chauncey Stillman through the latter’s attorney[\[194\]](#). At that time, Chauncey Devereux Stillman, 1929 graduate from Harvard and later convert to Catholicism, had for some time been pondering how to help Harvard and Catholics at the same time and he considered that the project of the Chair seemed the best way to do that.

In a second meeting of the Alumni Council, which took place in October 1956, they once again took up the question of the chair. On this occasion, the Faculty advisor of the Club, Francis Rodgers, was present. The secretary of the Club read the correspondence from the Archbishop and President Pusey and “Father Porras informed the Council of an Oct. 30th

meeting which he and Dr. Rogers are to have with certain alumni concerning the financial backing of the Chair at the College”[195].

Ten days later, Fr. Porrás wrote: “Had supper with Stillman at his apt. (72nd St. at 5 Ave, beautiful place) and we talked at length on the chair at Harvard. He is definitely planning to endow it on his own... After supper his lawyer arrived and we went through it all over again. I think it will work out much better this way”[196]. And before the end of 1956, the chaplain saw that things were moving even more quickly than they had hoped. “My conversation with + C seems to have precipitated things: Stillman is coming to see + C on Jan 2nd to discuss the Chair- if he is going that far it seems certain that he will give the money. Rogers has asked me to have dinner with him and Stillman that evening”[197].

In this way, in January 1957, the project of supporting the *Charles Chauncey Stillman Chair of Catholic Studies* was well defined and Stillman and Rogers met with President Pusey[198].

In the first days of January Fr. Porrás wrote: “The Chair of theology at Harvard is already a fact. Those who are giving the money have met with the Archbishop who had fully approved the plan so there will not be any difficulties. One can expect criticism of some who will not understand but since that will always be the case, we don’t need to pay much attention to them. This will have great repercussions because it will be a model that other universities will follow”[199]. And a few days later he confirmed that “Stillman’s visit to + C was very successful; since then he has talked with Pusey. Both men are very pleased, the money is ready and only the finishing touches are pending”[200].

We do not know if these details that were still pending coincided with the two topics that, according to Callahan, still needed to be defined in the spring of 1957: the place to erect the Chair and the person who would occupy it. According to Callahan, this opened “one of the great discussions of the century” in Harvard[201].

In any case, having reached this point, Fr. Porrás and the HCC stepped aside in order to let President Pusey and the faculty deans from the *Faculty of Arts and Sciences y Divinity School* take over. Initially, they had thought of placing it in the *Faculty of Arts and Sciences* but given the opposition of that dean, they began to study the possibility of placing it in the *Divinity School*. Here they also meet opposition. But during the fall of 1957 the obstacles between President Pusey and the dean of the *Divinity School*, Douglas Horton, were overcome. At the same time they reached an agreement on the profile of the occupant of the Chair and the duration of his appointment. Even though they did not set any confessional demands, informally, they agreed that the Chair holder would have to be Catholic and that he/she would hold the Chair for five years. According to Callahan, at the beginning of 1958 they also reached a consensus on the person: the English historian, Christopher Dawson[202].

Even though the role Fr. Porras played -from the HCC- in the foundation of the Chair is clear, I have not been able to find documentary evidence that could show his intervention -or that of any other member of the HCC-, in the choice of Dawson. Gueguen seems to understand that Fr. Porras and Dean Rogers proposed the name of the English historian. This had been suggested to them by Carl Schmitt, a graduate student in Medieval History who was then doing his doctorate with Charles Taylor[203]. On the other hand, Christina Scott, the daughter of Dawson, states that Stillman himself, sharing the desire of his friend and advisor, the Jesuit John LaFarge, had leaned toward choosing a Catholic Englishman to cover the post[204]. If we follow literally the two testimonials, both accounts could be made compatible. While the Jesuit could have suggested counting on an English Catholic, others concretely suggested Dawson. The fact is that all the interested parties: Stillman, Pusey, Cushing, Horton, Rogers and Porras, all agreed that the selection of the candidate could not be more appropriate.

In February 1958, the *Divinity School* inaugurated the *Charles Chauncey Stillman Guest Professorship of Roman Catholics Studies*, and named Christopher Dawson (1889-1970), as its first Chair, even though the news would not be made public until the final endorsement of the Board of Overseers. Independently of the greater or lesser involvement of Fr. Porras in the selection of the candidate, there is no doubt that the chaplain followed the matter very closely. In March, Fr. Porras knew that they were finalizing the details about the chair, that they had named Dawson and that the news would be made public in April[205]. In effect, on April 19, 1958, "The Pilot" gave the news in all detail. We could add that during the summer of 1958 when some problems arose with the visa for Christopher Dawson, and it was not clear that he would be able to come, Fr. Porras proposed the German philosopher Josef Pieper as an alternative[206]. In the end everything was favorably resolved for Dawson who came to Harvard in October of 1958. Christopher Dawson only stayed for four years because his health prevented him from staying the five years that had been foreseen.

This is not the moment to consider the impact that Dawson and his ideas about the need to recover Christian culture as the basis for Western civilization had in and beyond Harvard[207]. What we can add -because it directly affects the topic of this study- are some lines in which Fr. Porras passed on the news to some Harvard alumni who were in Rome with the founder of Opus Dei deepening their theological formation. "The reaction to the Chair has been very good. A great deal of publicity has come from it, all favorable, and everyone is very happy. One well-known agnostic professor commented: 'At last Harvard is a University'. The Archbishop is very pleased. There have been interviews, published, with Mr. Stillman, Dean Horton, etc. But the most wonderful thing about it all is that no one has linked it with me and our work at Harvard. This, I think, would be especially pleasing to the Father [he refers to St. Josemaria Escriva]. Years from now, no one (will) even remember I was here at the time, or that I ever had any connection with this"[208].

#### **4. BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN HARVARD AND THE BOSTON DIOCESE**

The previous pages have shown how Fr. Porras tried to carry out his function as chaplain at Harvard in complete and close contact with Archbishop Cushing. Cushing was pleased with the chaplain's work,[\[209\]](#) but he kept his distance from Harvard. His situation had become complicated especially since the crisis at the St. Benedict Center. In the years before President Pusey took over, Cushing had had some unfortunate encounters with the then president, James Bryant Conan, about subsidies to the Catholic schools[\[210\]](#).

Fr. Porras tried to help bring the Archbishop closer to the University. He relates that at a meeting with the Archbishop that took place three months after his appointment as chaplain: "He asked me if I had gone to Harvard and how things were going. I told him a few things and that we planned to organize something simple and intimate for him there in the spring. He said that he did not like to go there because of the Feeney people and it would be better to have something at Trimount House. I told him that the plan was to hold something at Radcliffe for the two Clubs and that we could avoid all publicity. I explained to him that part of our apostolate is to bring the faithful closer to the hierarchy so they might have more affection and greater respect. He liked that very much"[\[211\]](#).

At the same time and also from the beginning, Fr. Porras had tried to establish good relations with the Harvard community, beginning with President Pusey. Since the origins of the HCC the president of Harvard had taken part in some of the acts organized by the Club. But it doesn't seem that the Catholic chaplain had much contact with him. Fr. Porras writes: "When I took over the Club one of the first steps I took was to ask for an appointment with the Rector. They had to do some searching because there was no precedent for that. When they agreed and I went there, his secretary (a Catholic) told me: 'this is the first time I see a priest come into this office.' He was very cordial and offered to help in whatever would be necessary"[\[212\]](#).

In this way, Fr. Porras placed himself in a position to build bridges between Archbishop Cushing and President Pusey. The medium to accomplish this was the institution of the Senior Reception within the program of social activities of the HCC.

As we have seen above, Fr. Porras did not want to get personally involved in the social activities. That was his choice and he explained it to the Archbishop: "The fourth Wednesday (there is) a 'social' organized by the Club or by one of the women's college. I do not take any part in organizing, nor do I attend, these 'socials' as I prefer to concentrate my efforts on the spiritual and intellectual aspects of the students life"[\[213\]](#). The Senior Reception was the exception.

The Senior Reception was conceived as a gathering that would take place in April or May with the members of the HCC who would graduate that year and it was hoped that President Pusey and Archbishop Cushing would both attend. In February 1956, Fr. Porras invited the Archbishop and received word that he would be available: "He will attend the reception we have planned. He said he would like to meet Pusey. I hope we will be able to get Pusey to attend"[\[214\]](#). President Pusey also expressed his agreement and the first edition of the Senior Reception took place in April 1956. The president of Radcliffe and the president of the Radcliffe Catholic Club also attended.

As Fr. Porras states in his notes referring to the event and the Archbishop's comments after that gathering: "About 300 persons attended, many professors and he liked that. As we were leaving he said to me: 'this was wonderful. I think it's good to know these people and we ought to do this every year.'" [\[215\]](#). A little later Cushing himself wrote to a niece telling her about the event: "The President of Harvard was present. It was the first time I had the pleasure of meeting him" [\[216\]](#).

*The Crimson* also printed this news item: "Over 200 students, alumni, faculty members, and parents yesterday attended the Harvard and Radcliffe Catholic Clubs' first annual reception for members of the senior class. RICHARD J. CUSHING, Archbishop of Boston, and President PUSEY, meeting for the first time, were the guests of honor. The coffee reception, held in Phillips Brooks House yesterday afternoon, marked the first time also, that either the President or the prelate had appeared before the College religious group" [\[217\]](#).

The reception was held in successive years and after the second edition, Fr. Porras wrote: "Among the social activities we also hold an annual reception. We began that two years ago and at that time both the Archbishop and the Rector attended. (Before that, they didn't even know one another and now that have become good friends to the point where the Rector has consulted the Archbishop at times on a law that the local Legislature is proposing to adopt.)" [\[218\]](#). When Cushing died, *The Crimson* wrote in his obituary: "Cushing had a long connection with Harvard, and was known as a personal friend of President Pusey" [\[219\]](#).

After the fourth edition of the Senior Reception in April 1959, the first of Cushing as Cardinal, Fr. Porras wrote: "Most of the faculty was there and lot of students. He was very happy with it all. The whole thing was on TV on the 11 o'clock news" [\[220\]](#). Two months later Cardinal Cushing received a doctorate *honoris causa* from Harvard.

The Senior Reception of 1959 was the last that Cushing attended. As the Cardinal wrote to Fr. Porras, in April 1960, he had the intention to attend it: "Remind me to bring a photo with me for Mr. and Mrs. Pusey. After the Reception I'll try to call at Follen Street to see the house and break bread with you" [\[221\]](#). But in the end it was not possible [\[222\]](#).

## 5. THE END OF FR. PORRAS' CHAPLAINCY

On June 27, 1960 Fr. Porras met with Cardinal Cushing and following his custom, left some written notes: "Today I was with NAL [Cushing]. The principal reason was to talk about my resignation from the chaplaincy at Harvard. I told him that my superiors wanted me to do my doctorate in theology and that most certainly I would go to Rome in October to see what requisites I would have to fulfill and then to return to Boston. Besides, it seems to us that the work at Harvard had reached the point where the parish could take over this work. It was the most opportune moment for the transition so that a diocesan priest could take care of it"[223]. With a letter of July 5th, Cushing communicated to Hickey that Fr. Joseph Collins would take over Father Porras as chaplain of the HCC[224].

These laconic documents could lead one to think that Fr. Bill Porras' chaplaincy had ended in the same way as it had begun: apparently very rapid and unexpected. But it is clear that the authorities of Opus Dei had reached the conclusion that the moment had arrived -taking into account the circumstances of the dioceses and the HCC- to make it easier for the Cardinal to change the person at the head of the HCC. It is not possible for us here -in this already quite extensive article- to go deeper into the reasons that might have influenced this decision. Consequently, I will limit myself to commenting on the circumstances surrounding the transition. Fr. Joseph Collins, the new chaplain, had been coadjutor at St. Paul and chaplain to the Radcliffe Catholic Club since 1946[225].

That summer, Fr. Porras worked with Fr. Collins to effect the transition. We conserve two long letters in which Fr. Porras explains to Fr. Collins the state of the papers and other documents of the HCC. He gives him the summer addresses of the members of the Club's directive committees and informs him about the activities that are planned for the following academic year. Among these last, a conference to which they had invited Fr. Weigle, Tillich and Nils Ferre to deal with questions of Christology. In these letters, Fr. Porras also made reference to a future meeting between the two of them to finalize passing on further information[226]. Porras also counted on introducing Fr. Collins to some persons in the administration at Harvard that he had had contact with over the years[227].

At the beginning of the new academic year in September 1960, the president of the HCC informed the members about the change of chaplain and made it clear that during the six years that Fr. Porras had been chaplain the Club grew both in membership and in the quality of the activities[228].

The letter went on to make reference to the Student Center which they could begin to use in October and which was located near St. Paul's, on Arrow Street[229]. In March 1961, "The Pilot" printed the news about the inauguration of the new Student Center of the recently unified Harvard-Radcliffe Catholic Club.

By that time, Fr. Porras had already left Cambridge and returned to Boston, to Trimount House where six years earlier Archbishop Cushing had told him of his desire to name him chaplain at Harvard. In September 1962 Fr. Porras did move to Europe to obtain his ecclesiastical doctorate[230].

## CONCLUSION

The chaplaincy of Fr. William Porras (1954-1960) was an important moment for the Catholics at Harvard. They had been going through a complicated situation after the crisis of the St. Benedict Center and the excommunication of Fr. Leonard Feeney in 1953. Archbishop Cushing found in the young priest of Opus Dei -an institution that had begun to work in his diocese a couple of years earlier and that Cushing himself had had occasion to know in Spain- a loyal and effective collaborator. That is why it is not simply anecdotal that the Archbishop would name Fr. Porras chaplain while inaugurating the Trimount House residence in Boston. Throughout the six years of his chaplaincy Fr. Porras fostered an active and integrating presence of Catholics at Harvard and combated any trace of ghetto mentality as well as any clericalism. As Catholic chaplain, Fr. Porras tried to be known as one more -an insider- in the university community, among the students, the professors and the administrators.

Taking advantage of the favorable conditions under the presidency of Nathan Marsh Pusey, a man with great sensitivity toward religious matters, Fr. Porras from the HCC encouraged a series of initiatives that were to have repercussions far beyond the Catholic environment. It is not out of place to affirm that during Fr. Porras' chaplaincy the HCC attained a numerical growth and a lofty level in its programs and activities that were without precedent. Fr. Porras' vision was guided by the principles of participation, openness, continuity and capillary action in the HCC on campus. Throughout these pages we have been able to see how his initiatives were instrumental in bringing about the regular celebration of Mass on campus and also the inauguration of the *Charles Chauncey Stillman Chair of Catholic Studies*; the birth of the magazine *Current*; and the beginnings of more cordial relations between Harvard and the diocese of Boston, by arranging the meeting between Archbishop Cushing and President Pusey.

At the same time, Fr. Porras understood that his role as priest was not to become the representative of Catholics at Harvard nor to be the main figure in these accomplishments. It seems that he understood that his mission was to promote the spiritual and intellectual growth of the laity and to this effect he planned the spiritual and cultural programs. Fr. Porras did not hesitate to propose to the young students at Harvard the quest for sanctity and apostolic efforts taking advantage of their personal circumstances.

In keeping with the spirit and praxis of Opus Dei Fr. Bill Porras felt that sanctity and apostolic action should be sought above through work, professional relations and in friendship proper



to university life. He considered the HCC as a good instrument for this broader but less tangible objective. Even though there were some who did not share this vision there were many who did, as we have been able to point out.

Hence, with this vision, Fr. Porras offered at one and the same time, a positive and constructive response to the process of secularization that many Catholics were aware of and which, on occasions, had led some to isolate themselves. We could say that Fr. Porras assumed a position diametrically opposed to that of Fr. Feeney. He urged Catholics not to isolate themselves from the adverse environment but to offer a positive influence to that environment.

At the same time, the response of Fr. Porras was not that of accepting -assimilating- uncritically a secularized culture and way of life. He did not underestimate the challenges that a secularized culture -in the widely accepted negative meaning given to this term, implying the loss of religious values in the cultural and social scene- represented for the young Catholics at Harvard. His response was to encourage lay Catholics -competent professionals, well formed in doctrine- to be present in all technical, scientific and humanistic sectors. And in this sense, one could say that he tried to promote a process of positive secularization. He also understood this as overcoming certain clerical attitudes and recognizing the mission of the laity.

At the beginning of these pages we referred to the characterization that Gleason made about American Catholicism before Vatican II. He speaks about the conflict between two opposing currents. On the one hand there was the desire to construct a “distinctive Catholic culture” proper to the “Catholic Revival” and on the other hand some “assimilative tendencies” proper to the “New era” that would consider secularization (understood univocally) as something desirable, something that should be sought after. Given this scenario one might think that Fr. Porras’ ideas would fit instead into a third way that sought to overcome the strict dichotomy between “isolation” and “assimilation” and consequently not a vision of a univocal process of secularization. From this perspective I think it would be interesting to study other similar cases in American Catholicism before the Council.

We can conclude saying that during the six years of his chaplaincy Fr. Porras was not able to offer the HCC two of his greatest ambitions: to have a Catholic Center and to have a full-time Chaplain. But at the same time, it is clear that Fr. Porras did manage to lay the foundations for these objectives from the moment in which he helped to overcome, both at Harvard and in the archdiocese of Boston, the distrust provoked by the crisis of the St. Benedict Center.

## ENDNOTES

[1] Article originally published in Spanish in *Studia et Documenta. Rivista dell'Istituto Storico San Josemaría Escrivá*, vol. 12 (2018), pp. 317-380.

[2] Cf. Gueguen, John A., Jr., "The early Days of Opus Dei in Boston as Recalled by the First Generation (1946-1956)" in *Studia et Documenta: Rivista dell'Istituto Storico San Josemaría Escrivá*, 1 (2007), pp. 65-112. The events related are described on pp. 81-85. In the future we will refer to this article as Gueguen, 2007.

[3] *The Boston Traveler*, Tuesday, October 19, 1954.

[4] Dimitrovic, Brian, "Nathan Marsh Pusey: An Appreciation" in *Modern Age*, 46 (2004), pp. 278-284.

[5] Harvard's total enrollment for the fall of 1954 was 10,364, which included 4,430 in the undergraduate College (all male) and 5,934 in the graduate faculties and professional schools (Harvard Alumni Bulletin, Nov. 27, 1954, pp. 205-206. Of the 4,400 undergraduates it is estimated that some 400 were Catholic. Cf. Gueguen, 2007, p. 84.

[6] In Jeffrey Wills' account of the Harvard Catholic Club in the 1950s (Cf. Wills, Jeffrey, *The Catholics of Harvard Square*, Petersham MA, 1993, pp. 95-96) Fr. Porras is mentioned only superficially. Something similar occurs in the three accounts of the Harvard Catholic Club that are preserved in the archives of Harvard University (Harvard-Radcliffe Catholic Club, formerly St. Paul's Catholic Club, HUD. 3762.5000, General folder. Harvard University Archives). In the latter case, the accounts were redacted toward the end of the 1960s and in the early 1970s and there is no mention of Fr. Porras. One may find references to Fr. Porras as Chaplain in Williams, George H., *Divinings: Religion at Harvard from its Origins in New England Ecclesiastical History to the 175th Anniversary of the Harvard Divinity School, 1636-1992*, 2014, pp. 286-287. Cf. also Gueguen, 2007, pp. 83-88.

[7] Cf. Gleason, Philip, *Contending with Modernity: Catholic Higher Education in the Twentieth Century*, New York, 1995, 434 pp. Cf. also Hayes, Patrick J., *A Catholic Brain Trust: The History of the Catholic Commission on Intellectual and Cultural Affairs 1945-1965*, Notre dame IN, 2011, 432 pp. The latter describes in detail the discussion concerning the work of Thomas F. O'Dea, *American Catholic Dilemma*, 1958; Cf. also, Kelly, Timothy I., *The Transformation of American Catholicism: The Pittsburgh laity and the Second Vatican Council, 1950-1972*, Notre dame IN, 2009, 353 pp.

[8] The sources we will rely on are principally the Archives of Harvard University (HUA), the Archives of the Archdiocese of Boston (AAB) and the General Archives of the Prelature of Opus Dei (AGP). This last source contains abundant correspondence of Fr. Porras, as well as other writings from his tenure at Harvard.

[9] For the history of the Harvard Catholic Club in its first 50 years, we follow Wills, Jeffrey, *The Catholics of Harvard Square*, Petersham MA, 1993, 212 pp. Henceforth referred to as Wills, 1993.

[10] Concerning the history of PBH, Cf. Mieras, Emily, “In Search of ‘A more Perfect Sympathy’: Harvard’s Phillips Brooks House Association and the Challenges of Student Voluntarism,” *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, 16-2 (2017), pp. 163-182.

[11] Wills, 1993, p. 89 and O’Connor, Thomas H., *Boston Catholics: A History of the Church and Its People*, Boston, 1998, p. 218.

[12] At that time Harvard only admitted men as undergraduates. Women could attend Radcliffe College, also located in Cambridge, MA. From 1906 on, Radcliffe College had its own Catholic Club.

[13] Wills, 1993, pp. 9 and 13.

[14] Wills, 1993, p. 86.

[15] The St. Benedict center had no formal connection with the HCC, but there are documents about the center in the archives of the Archdiocese of Boston. AAB, St. Paul’s Parish. Cambridge MA, Harvard-Radcliffe Catholic Student Center, Records, 1940-1995. Box 1. In the future, references are indicated as AAB, St. Paul’s Parish, Box 1.

[16] Cf. Wills, 1993, p. 15; O’Toole, James M., *The Faithful: A History of Catholics in America*, Cambridge, MA, 2008, pp. 254-55; Patrick W. Carey, “Avery Dulles, St. Benedict’s Center, and No Salvation outside the Church, 1940-1953”, in *The Catholic Historical Review*, 93 (2007), pp. 553-75 and Mary Clare Vincent, *Keeping the Faith at Harvard: A Memoir*, 2010, 258 pp.

[17] Wills, 1993, pp. 123-124.

[18] Cf. Pepper, George B., *The Boston Heresy Case in View of the Secularization of Religion: A Case Study in the Sociology of Religion*, *Studies in Religion and Society*, Lewiston, NY, 1988, 209 pp.

[19] These words of Clement Lee Counts Jr. appear in a letter of Paul J. Cuddy (priest of the Diocese of Rochester) to Archbishop Cushing, September 22, 1946. AAB, Catholics at Harvard, M-1616.

[20] Milligan to Cushing, February 25, 1949. AAB, Harvard-Radcliffe Catholic Club. M-2178.

[21] Trudon to Cushing, March 18, 1950. AAB, Harvard-Radcliffe Catholic Club. M-2178.

[22] Cushing to Trudon, March 23, 1950. AAB, Harvard-Radcliffe Catholic Club. M-2178.

[23] Cushing to Fallon, July 25, 1950. AAB, Harvard-Radcliffe Catholic Club. M-2178.

[24] Hickey to Cushing, July 5, 1950. AAB, Harvard-Radcliffe Catholic Club. M-2178.

[25] Secretary of the HCC to Robert M. O'Shea, August 24, 1950. AAB, Harvard-Radcliffe Catholic Club. M-2178. The letter contains the information that had reached the diocese concerning the donations received for the Catholic Center. It includes the names of four persons who had donated a total of \$95. The last person named is John F. Kennedy, but it is noted that the amount is unknown.

[26] Report on the chaplaincy at Harvard from Lawrence J. Riley, July 7, 1951. AAB, Harvard-Radcliffe Catholic Club. M-2178.

[27] This seems to come from the correspondence between the president of the HCC, Leo Zavatone and the chaplain, Fr. Vincent McQuade. This is conserved in the Archive of the Archdiocese of Boston Communities of open MTG, Rev. Vincent McQuade, Chaplain 1954. AAB, St. Paul's Parish, Box 1.

[28] St. Benedict Center carried on its activities for some years in Cambridge until in 1958 Fr. Feeney and small group of his followers who called themselves Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary moved to a nearby location. Fr. Feeney was reconciled to the Roman Catholic Church in 1972.

[29] Memorandum to Fr. Riley from Fr. Cotter, April 7, 1954. AAB, Harvard-Radcliffe Catholic Club. M-2178. Fr. Cotter recounts the complaints that had reached him from a student he knew at Harvard.

[30] Letter from an unknown person to Pat Harrington and Fr. Redding, not dated, but archived with the documents of 1952. Student center report correspondence on a proposed new center, 1952-57. AAB, St. Paul's Parish, Box 1.

[31] Zavatone to McQuade, July 30, 1954. Communities of open MTG, Rev. Vincent McQuade, Chaplain 1954. AAB, St. Paul's Parish, Box 1.

[32] Porrás Muñoz Guillermo, en Diccionario Porrúa de Historia, Biografía y Geografía de México, vol. III, Editorial Porrúa, S. A., México 1995, p. 2771. Y Rubén Rodríguez Balderas, *Guillermo Porrás Muñoz (1917-1988), a los 20 Años de su fallecimiento. Breve semblanza de un connotado historiador*, en *Historia Desconocida. Libro Anual de la Sociedad Mexicana de Historia Eclesiástica*, México 2008, pp. 272-280. Gueguen, *The Early Days of Opus Dei in Boston*, p. 75, speaks of Poras's having been an atheist in his youth but none of the documentation we have consulted supports that.

[33] Cf. Alfonso Martínez Rosales, "Don Guillermo Porrás Muñoz, 1917-1988", *Historia Mexicana*, 38 (1988), pp.171-172.

[34] Porrás to Escrivá, July 25, 1947. AGP, serie M.1.1. 233-B1.

[35] Porrás to Escrivá, February 20, 1950. AGP, series M.1.1. 309-B1.

[36] About Adele Kibre, doctor in History, University of Chicago, and independent scholar, cf. Jane Chance, *Women Medievalists and the Academy*, Madison, WI, 2005, p. 5.

[37] Porras to Jorge Brosa, August 7, 1947. AGP, series M.1.1. 233-B1.

[38] Escrivá to Porras, April 16, 1948. AGP, series A.3.4. leg. 260, carp. 2.

[39] Testimony of Guillermo Porras on Josemaría Escrivá. AGP, series A.5. 239-1-5.

[40] Porras to Escrivá, January 7, 1948. AGP, series M.1.1. 254-B2.

[41] Cf. Several letters from Porras, May 1949. AGP, series M.1.1. 273-B5.

[42] Muzquiz to Escrivá, January 2, 1951. AGP, series M.1.1. 1141-B01.

[43] Muzquiz to Escrivá, August 19, 1951. AGP, series M.1.1. 1141-C01.

[44] Notes of Porras, September 30, 1952. AGP, series M.1.1. 1144-A2.

[45] Regarding the beginnings of Opus Dei in the U.S., see Coverdale, John F., *Putting Down Roots: Father Joseph Muzquiz and the Growth of Opus Dei, 1912–1983*, New York, 2009 and Federico M. Requena, “‘We find our sanctity in the middle of the world’: Father José Luis Múzquiz and the Beginnings of Opus Dei in the United States, 1949–1961”, *U.S. Catholic Historian*, 32 (2014), pp. 101-124.

[46] Muzquiz to Escrivá, February 17, 1949. AGP, series M.1.1. 1138-D04. Molinoviejo is a country house near Segovia (a little north of Madrid) where the Founder of Opus Dei often met with early members; acquired in 1945, it became Opus Dei’s first conference center in Spain.

[47] Cf. Coverdale, John F., “José María González Barredo. An American Pioneer”, *Studia et Documenta: Rivista dell’Istituto Storico san Josemaría Escrivá*, 10 (2016), pp. 23-43.

[48] Muzquiz to Escrivá, January 2, 1951. AGP, series M.1.1. 1141-B01.

[49] Muzquiz to Escrivá, January 2, 1951. AGP, series M.1.1. 1141-B01. At that time, Opus Dei had been approved as a Secular Institute. Several decades had to pass before it would receive its current juridical status as a Personal Prelature. Cf. Fuenmayor, Amadeo de; Valentín Gómez-Iglesias and José Luis Illanes, *The Canonical Path of Opus Dei: The History and Defense of a Charism*, Princeton, NJ, 1994.

[50] Muzquiz to Escrivá, August 19, 1951. AGP, series M.1.1. 1141-C01. On the relationship of Archbishop Cushing with the figure of the Apostle St. James cf. James F. Garneau, “‘Santiago Matacomunistas’? Cardinal Cushing’s Crusade against Communism in Latin America and the St. James Society”, in *U.S. Catholic Historian*, 22 (2004), pp. 97-115.

[51] Toward the end of 1951, Santiago Polo was accepted into a two-year post-graduate program of studies in spectroscopy at Harvard. In the fall of 1952, he was joined by Luis Garrido, who began his work for a Ph.D. in Physics, also at Harvard.

[52] Muzquiz to Escrivá, February 28, 1952, AGP series M.1.1. 1143-A01.

[53] Notes of Porras, September 30, 1952, AGP, series M.1.1. 1144-A01.

[54] Details about the acquisition and installation of the residence: cf. Gueguen, 2007, pp. 75-83.

[55] *Boston Post*, February 21, 1954.

[56] Notes of Porras, June 15, 1954, AGP, series M 1.1. 1147-B1.

[57] Muzquiz to Escrivá, October 23, 1954, AGP series M.1.1. 1147-B1.

[58] Gueguen, 2007, p. 84.

[59] Specifics of the inauguration, in Gueguen, 2007, pp. 81-83.

[60] Muzquiz to Escrivá, October 23, 1954, AGP, series M.1.1. 1147, B-1. Fr. Porras' notes on his appointment are more explicit: "The appointment as chaplain comes directly from the Archbishop, who, in our case, decided to entrust Opus Dei with the position, instead of naming a specific person". Memorandum of Guillermo Porras, July 17, 1957, p. 6. This is an 8-page document, which – as is stated in the copy kept in the U.S., was sent to Rome by Fr. Porras. I was unable to locate this document in AGP, and thus I am using the copy which is found, together with other papers of Fr. Porras, at Murray Hill Place, location of the regional governing body of Opus Dei in the U.S. In the future we will refer to it as Memorandum (1957).

[61] Besides the information that Fr. Porras gave the Bishop by word of mouth, he also sent him written reports. Cf. Report on Catholic Activities at Harvard University 1954-1958, (Rev.) William M. Porras. Chaplain. AAB. Chancery Office. Catholic Activities at Harvard University, AT M-1322. There are also other reports from the 58-59 and 59-60 academic years. Henceforth we will quote them as Report, followed by the corresponding years in parentheses and the page number. There is an abundant amount of documentation on the Catholic Club in the archive of the Boston Diocese: St. Paul's Parish. Cambridge, MA. Harvard-Radcliffe Catholic Student Center. Records, 1940-1995. Box 1. In evaluating the amount of activity carried out by Chaplain Porras, it is interesting to note that of the 56 folders that cover the period 1940-1995, 36 correspond to the years of his chaplaincy (1954-1960).

[62] Report (54-58), p 1.

[63] "I considered it impractical to try to contact each student individually, and have concentrated my efforts in training leaders who could be –and have been- an influence not only on other students but on the environment itself". Report (54-58), p. 1.

[64] Notes of Porras, Boston November 30, 1954. AGP, series M.1.1. 1146-B4.

[65] Derro, Robert, "Lay apostolate on the secular campus", *Current*, February 1956, p. 4.

[66] Cf. Gueguen, 2007 y 2009. Throughout these years there were also vocations for other institutions. For example: "During this time two Harvard students, one of whom was the president of the Club, entered the Novitiate of the Paulists. I wholeheartedly supported their decision." Draft of a letter from Porras to the Chaplain of the National Federation of Newman Clubs, December 15, 1960. AGP, series E.4.2. 91-1.

[67] McCabe to Porras, May 13, 1955. Corr. Fr Porras officers, 1954-1955. AAB, St. Paul's Parish, Box 1.

[68] Porras to McCabe, June 9, 1955. Corr. Fr Porras officers, 1954-1955. AAB, St. Paul's Parish, Box 1.

[69] Porras to Escrivá, February 28, 1955. AGP, series E.4.2. 91-1.

[70] Porras to Muzquiz, May 2, 1955. AGP, series M.1.1. 1149-A3.

[71] Report (54-58), p. 2. He had begun with two afternoons every week: Monday and Tuesday, and beginning in October 57, he added Friday.

[72] During those first years he could be found in Trimount House, 22 and 24 Marlborough St., Boston. Then beginning in 1956 he could also be found at Cambridge, in an apartment at the Hotel Ambassador, 1737 Cambridge St. In May 1958 Porras took up residence in Cambridge and could also be reached in the successive centers that Opus Dei had in those years: Auburn Street, n. 45, Cambridge; once again the Hotel Ambassador, 1737 Cambridge St.; and finally, during that last year, in the new residence: Elmbrook, at 25 Follen Street, Cambridge.

[73] *Harvard Catholic Club. Newsletter*, n.1, vol. 1, October 1955.

[74] Porras to Muzquiz, February 4, 1955. 1955. AGP, series M.1.1. 1149-A3.

[75] Report (54-58), p. 14.

[76] Cf. Cornelius de Witt Hastie (Graduate Secretary) to James McMurphy (president of the HCC), 17 mayo 1955. Corr. Fr Porras officers, 1956-1957. AAB, St. Paul's Parish, Box 1.

[77] Report (54-58), p. 14

[78] Memorandum (1957), p. 6.

[79] Porras to Wright, April 13, 1956 and September 29, 1956. Corr. Fr Porras officers, 1956-1957. AAB, St. Paul's Parish, Box 1.

[80] Memorandum (1957), p. 4.

[81] Report (54-58), p. 14.

[82] Alice M. Belcher (Administrative Assistant to the University Marshal) to Porras, April 1958. AGP, series M.1.1. 1162-D2.

[83] Culter to Porras, March 25, 1960; Porras to Mathews (Archbishop Spellman High School), March 30, 1960; Culter to Porras, April 20, 1960 and Mathews to Porras, May 13, 1960. AAB, St. Paul's Parish, Box 1.

[84] Draft of a letter from Porras to the Chaplain of the National Federation of Newman Clubs, December 15, 1960. AGP, series E.4.2. 91-1.

[85] Report (59-60), p. 5.

[86] Notes of Porras, November 30, 1954. AGP, series M.1.1. 1146-B4.

[87] Report (54-58), p. 2.

[88] Letter from Cornelius de Witt Hastie (Graduate Secretary) to James McMurphy (president HCC), May 17, 1955. Corr. Fr Porras officers, 1956-1957. AAB, St. Paul's Parish, Box 1.

[89] Notes of Porras, February 29, 1956. AGP, series E.4.2. 91-1.

[90] Porras to Escrivá, March 11, 1956, AGP, series E.4.2. 91-1.

[91] Notes of Porras, April 23, 1956. AGP, series E.4.2. 91-1.

[92] Minutes of the first meeting of the Alumni Council, May 29, 1956. Harvard Catholic Club, Alumni Council, 1956-1962. AAB, St. Paul's Parish, Box 1.

[93] Minutes of the second meeting of the Alumni Council, October 17, 1956. Harvard Catholic Club, Alumni Council, 1956-1962. AAB, St. Paul's Parish, Box 1.

[94] "Report on the Proposed Harvard Catholic Center". Student centers report correspondence on a proposed new centers, 1952-57. AAB, St. Paul's Parish, Box 1.

[95] Manahan to Cushing, May 31, 1957. Student centers report correspondence on a proposed new centers, 1952-57. AAB, St. Paul's Parish, Box 1.

[96] Notes of Porras, July 23, 1956. AGP, series E.4.2. 91-1.

[97] Cushing to Manahan, June 1, 1957. Student centers report correspondence on a proposed new centers, 1952-57. AAB, St. Paul's Parish, Box 1.



[98] Porras to Manahan, June 16, 1957. Student centers report correspondence on a proposed new centers, 1952-57. AAB, St. Paul's Parish, Box 1.

[99] Porras to Manahan, June 16, 1957. Student centers report correspondence on a proposed new centers, 1952-57. AAB, St. Paul's Parish, Box 1.

[100] David E. Herlihy (secretary of the H.C.C.) to Riley, October 1, 1957. AAB. Harvard-Radcliffe Catholic Club. M-2178.

[101] Riley to Herlihy, October 10, 1957. AAB. Harvard-Radcliffe Catholic Club. M-2178.

[102] Order of the day for the meeting of the Harvard Catholic Club, October 11, 1957, 8 p.m. Among other items we take note of n. 7. "Discussion of the Catholic Center report as presented to Archbishop Cushing by the Harvard Catholic Club on June 1, 1957". AAB. Harvard-Radcliffe Catholic Club. M-2178.

[103] Notes of Porras, April 15, 1959. AGP, series E.4.2. 91-1.

[104] Memorandum (1957), p. 7.

[105] Porras to Manahan, June 16, 1957. Student centers report correspondence on a proposed new centers, 1952-57. AAB, St. Paul's Parish, Box 1.

[106] Report (54-58), p. 5.

[107] Harvard Catholic Club. Constitutions and By-Laws. Revisions 1955-56. AAB. St. Paul's Parish, Box 1.

[108] Report (54-58), p. 5.

[109] Harvard Catholic Club. Constitutions and By-Laws. Revisions 1955-56. AAB. St. Paul's Parish, Box 1. The By-Laws also foresee that "The Chaplain shall be appointed by the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Boston".

[110] Report (54-58), p. 11.

[111] Manahan to Sullivan, May 4, 1956. Harvard Catholic Club, Alumni Council, 1956-1962. AAB, St. Paul's Parish, Box 1.

[112] Minutes of the first meeting of the Alumni Council, May 29, 1956. Harvard Catholic Club, Alumni Council, 1956-1962. AAB, St. Paul's Parish, Box 1.

[113] Harvard Catholic Club. Constitutions and By-Laws. Revisions 1955-56. AAB. St. Paul's Parish, Box 1.

[114] Cf. Draft of the message of President Manahan, 1957. Revisions 1955-56. AAB. St. Paul's Parish, Box 1.

[115] *Current*, November 1955.

[116] Report (54-58), p. 3 y 7.

[117] Report (54-58), p. 7.

[118] Memorandum (1957), p. 3.

[119] Report (54-58), p. 10.

[120] Report (58-59), p. 1.

[121] Report (59-60), p. 1.

[122] Report (58-59), p. 2.

[123] Report (54-58), p. 4.

[124] Report (54-58), p. 4.

[125] Report (54-58), p. 4.

[126] Porras to José Ramón Madurga, October 1, 1957. AGP, series M.1.1. 1157-B1.

[127] Porras to an unidentified person, February 7, 1958. Corr. Fr Porras officers, 1956-1957 (bis). AAB, St. Paul's Parish, Box 1.

[128] Report (59-60), p. 4.

[129] Almost the complete collection of these publications can be found in the archive of Harvard University. HUA, HUD 3762.5255 A. Catholic Club-Current. Beginning with the issue of October-November 1959 of "Current" and the entire collection of "The Current" can be found in HUA, HUD 3762.5259 Box. 1. Harvard Catholic Club.

[130] Porras to Curtin, Juine 1955. AGP, series M.1.1. 1149-A3.

[131] *Harvard Catholic Club. Newsletter*, n. 2, vol. 1, November 1955, p. 4.

[132] The appointment was communicated by HCC to the interested parties and they were asked to revise the review that would then be published. Cf. Manahan to Adenauer, January 17, 1956; Manahan to the Governor of Ohio, February 7, 1956. AAB, St. Paul's Parish, Box 1.

[133] Report (54-58), p. 4.

[134] Report (59-60), p. 3.

[135] “About the Current”, *Current*, October-November 1959, p. 2.

[136] Report (59-60), p. 3.

[137] Wills, 1993, pp. 80-96.

[138] Saint Josemaría Escrivá, *The Way*, Chicago, 1954, no. 291.

[139] *Ibid.* 335.

[140] *Ibid.* 346.

[141] *Ibid.* 961.

[142] *Ibid.* 27.

[143] Cf. Chinnici, *The Catholic Community at Prayer*, 41-51; Hennessey, *American Catholics*, 255, 265 and 266; Wolfteich, *American Catholics through the Twentieth Century*, p. 26 and O’Toole, *The Faithful: A History of Catholics in America*, Cambridge, Mass., 2008, pp.158-198.

[144] Cf. For example, Gueguen, 2007, pp. 75, 100 y 109.

[145] “St. Paul’s Liturgy in 1960”, in Wills, 1993, p. 51.

[146] The first references are from June 55. Cf. Porrás to Curtin, July 15, 55. AGP, series M.1.1. 1149-A3. In this letter the question is posed as “a very delicate topic and we don’t want to created any antagonisms”.

[147] Porrás to Escrivá, September 30, 1955. AGP, series M.1.1. 1149-B1.

[148] Wills, 1993, p. 211, note 97.

[149] Porrás to Muzquiz, October 9, 1955. AGP, series M.1.1. 1149-A3.

[150] Brandeis University had been founded in 1948 by the Jewish community in the United States. At that time there were about 100 Catholic students attending and the bishop had inaugurated a chapel there and entrusted the chaplaincy to the Paulist Fathers. Cf. Porrás to Escrivá, March 11, 1956. AGP, series M.1.1. 1152-A7.

[151] Notes of Porrás, July 23, 1956. AGP, series E.4.2. 91-1.

[152] Porras to Escrivá, August 15, 1956. AGP, series M.1.1. 1152-B1.

[153] In 1935, St. Josemaría wrote: “Prayer. A lot on this topic, because, if you don’t make the boys men of prayer, you have wasted your time.” Escrivá, *Instruction*, 9-I-1935, no. 133, quoted in Escrivá, *The Way: a Critical-Historical Edition prepared by Pedro Rodriguez*, New York, 2009, commentary on no. 961.

[154] Porras to Muzquiz, October 9, 1955. AGP, series M.1.1. 1149-B1.

[155] Memorandum (1957), p. 4.

[156] Memorandum (1957), p. 3.

[157] Porras to Muzquiz, October 15, 1956. AGP, series M.1.1. 1152-B1.

[158] In regard to his good relationship with the Paulist Fr. Edward Nugent, chaplain of M.I.T. and of the Law School, cf. Gueguen, 2010, p. 268. For activity in the Harvard Business School, cf. Gueguen, 2010, p. 284-85.

[159] Porras to Burke, November 20, 1958. AGP, series M.1.1. 1162-D1.

[160] Porras to Escrivá, May 1, 1959. AGP, series M.1.1. 1168-A8.

[161] Dennis Helming, in Gueguen, 2007, p. 109.

[162] Report (54-58), p. 10.

[163] Notes of Porras, September 6, 1955. AGP, series E.4.2. 91-1.

[164] Report (54-58), p. 12.

[165] Gueguen, 2007, p. 100.

[166] Solomita to Porras, no date [1955], AGP, series M.1.1. 1149-B1.

[167] Memorandum (1957), p. 5.

[168] Trudon to Cushing, March 18, 1950. AAB, Harvard-Radcliffe Catholic Club. M-2178.

[169] Wills, 1993, p. 80.

[170] Porras to Muzquiz, February 22 [1957]. AGP, series M.1.1. 1157-A12.

[171] Memorandum (1957), p. 4.

[172] The abundant correspondence located in AAB, St. Paul's Parish, Box 1, is of considerable interest to know the names of the persons invited. One can also consult the ads for the activities that are listed both on the posters as well as in the issues of the Newsletter y *Current*. HUA, HUD 3762.5259 Box. 1. Harvard Catholic Club.

[173] Manahan to one of the librarians at Lamont Library, January 30, 1956. AAB, St. Paul's Parish, Box 1.

[174] Report (58-59), p. 1.

[175] One can read in a magazine from Providence College: "[Fr. Haas] is one of the few priests I have met who is able to both understand and communicate with our generation", *The Cowl*, March 17, 1965.

[176] Murphy to Doyle, March 14, 1956. Corr. Fr Porras officers, 1956-1957. AAB, St. Paul's Parish, Box 1.

[177] Harvard Catholic Club. Newsletter, n. 2, vol. 1, November 1955, p. 4.

[178] Osterreicher to Porras, March of 58. AAB, St. Paul's Parish, Box 1.

[179] LaFarge to Dowling, May 16, 1958. AAB, St. Paul's Parish, Box 1.

[180] Report (59-60), p. 2. In Wills, 1993, p. 95, these words are introduced as "students reported", without citing the source.

[181] There is a photo in Wills, 1993, p. 95. (Porras can be seen at the head table.)

[182] Porras to Muzquiz, December 5, 1955. AGP, series M.1.1. 1149-B1.

[183] Gleason, 1995, p. 147.

[184] I have found four publications that contain data on the creation of the Chair. In the first place there are the recollections of Daniel Callahan, assistant to Dawson during his stay at Harvard, published in *Harvard Theological Review*, 66 (1973) under the title "Christopher Dawson 12 October 1889-25 May 1970"; also Wills, 1993, p. 98. We also have the recollections of Dawson's daughter, Christina Scott, *A historian and his world: a life of Christopher Dawson, 1889-1970*, London 1984 p. 18. It should be noted that fundamentally the account of these happenings previous to his arrival in Harvard depend on Daniel Callahan. Finally we can cite Gueguen, 2010, pp. 255-294, who touches on the question in pp. 269-271.

[185] Only the article of Gueguen, 2010, pp. 269-271, makes reference to the role that Fr. Porras played as a part of the HCC. But like the rest of the works quoted, Gueguen documents the question only by basing himself on private testimonies.

[186] According to Callahan, the idea of a chair of Catholic theology at Harvard was a topic of hopeful discussions as early as 1952, even though it was only in 1956 that, thanks to the push of the HCC, it really began to take shape. Cf. Callahan, 1973, p. 97. It is not possible to know what sources that led Callahan to make this affirmation.

[187] Pusey is responding to a second letter from Horgan since the first one of March 19, never reached the desk of the President. Pusey to Horgan, April 30, 1956. Corr. Fr. Porrás officers, 1956-1957. AAB, St. Paul's Parish, Box 1.

[188] Notes of Porrás, April 23, 1956. AGP, series E.4.2. 91-1.

[189] Minutes of the first meeting of the Alumni Council, May 29, 1956. Harvard Catholic Club, Alumni Council, 1956-1962. AAB, St. Paul's Parish, Box 1.

[190] Porrás to Escrivá, August 15, 1956. AGP, series M.1.1. 1152-B1.

[191] Horgan to Cushing, September 25, 1956, AAB, Harvard-Radcliffe Catholic Club. M-2178. It is interesting to note that Horgan in this letter makes explicit reference to the Chair being in the *Divinity School*. According to Callahan the discussion about where to have the Chair did not begin until the spring of 1957. Cf. Callahan, 1973, p. 163. I have not been able to find the letter of Pusey to Horgan. But it might be the one that Fr. Porrás included in one of his reports to the Archbishop. According to the chaplain, President Pusey had written to Horgan: "Let me say at once that the suggestion made by the Harvard Catholic Club is enormously interesting... The idea seems to be a good one. You are to be commended for having based it, and I shall be happy it can be brought to fruition". Report (54-58), p. 14.

[192] Riley to Horgan, October 1, 1965. ABB, Harvard-Radcliffe Catholic Club. M-2178.

[193] Notes of Porrás, October 6, 1956. AGP, serie M.1.1. 1152-B1.

[194] Callahan, 1973, pp. 162-63.

[195] Minutes from the second meeting of the Alumni Council, October 17, 1956. Harvard Catholic Club, Alumni Council, 1956-1962. AAB, St. Paul's Parish, Box 1.

[196] Porrás to Muzquiz, October 26, 1956. AGP, series M.1.1. 1152-B.

[197] Porrás to Muzquiz, December 18, 1956. AGP, series M.1.1. 1152-B1.

[198] Callahan, 1973, p. 163.

[199] Porrás to Escrivá, January 4, 1957. AGP, series M.1.1. 1157-A12.

[200] Porrás to Muzquiz, January 9, 57. AGP, serie M.1.1. 1157-A12.

[201] Callahan, 1973, pp. 163.

[202] Callahan, 1973, pp. 164-65.

[203] Cf. Gueguen, 2010, p. 270, note 42.

[204] Christina Scott, *A historian and his world: a life of Christopher Dawson, 1889-1970*, London, 1984, p. 183.

[205] Porras to Burke, March 30, 1958. AGP, series M.1.1. 1662-D2.

[206] Cf. Notes of Porras, July 14, 1948. Kept in the file: "Boston 51-59", Murray Hill Place, seat of the regional government of Opus Dei in the U.S.

[207] An approximation of the topic can be found in Scott, Christina, *A Historian and His World: a Life of Christopher Dawson, 1889-1970*, London, 1984; Gleason, Philip, *Contending With Modernity: Catholic Higher Education In The Twentieth Century*, New York, 1995, 434 pp. and Hayes, Patrick J., *A Catholic Brain Trust. The History Of The Catholic Commission On Intellectual And Cultural Affairs, 1945-1965*, Notre Dame IN, 2011.

[208] Porras to students at Roman College, May 20, 1958. AGP, series M.1.1. 1162-D2.

[209] In addition to his regular meetings with the Archbishop three or four times a year, Fr. Porras would send written reports of his activities and also send information through the officers about the other activities of the Club. These included information on the results of the elections and the minutes of the reunions of the Alumni Club. This documentation is available in the archive of the Boston Archdiocese, for example: Manahan to Cushing, January 15, 1956 and Horgan to Cushing, September 25, 1956. AAB, Harvard-Radcliffe Catholic Club. M-2178; Harvard Catholic Club, Alumni Council, 1956-1962. St. Paul's Parish, Box 1 and Catholic Activities at Harvard University, AT M (Chancery office. Miscellaneous)-1322.

[210] Cf. John T. McGreevy, "Thinking on One's Own: Catholicism in the American Intellectual Imagination, 1928-1960", *The Journal of American History*, 84 (1997), pp. 97-131.

[211] Notes of Porras, January 12, 1955. AGP, series E.4.2. 91-1.

[212] Memorandum (1957), p. 4.

[213] Report (54-58), p. 12.

[214] Notes of Porras, February 29, 1956. AGP, series E.4.2. 91-1.

[215] Notes of Porras, May 1, 1956. AGP, series E.4.2. 91-1.

[216] Cushing to Kathleen Purcel (London), May 3 1956. AGP, series E.4.2. 91-1.

[217] *The Crimson*, May 1, 1956.

[218] Memorandum (1957), p. 4.

[219] *The Crimson*, November 3, 1970.

[220] Porras to Burke, April 15, 1959. AGP, series M.1.1. 1162-D1.

[221] Cushing to Porras, April 15, 1960. AGP, series E.4.2. 91-1. A few months earlier the residence of Opus Dei in Cambridge had been installed on Follen Street and Fr. Porras was living there.

[222] Report (59-60), p. 5.

[223] Notes of Porras, June 27, 60. AGP, series E.4.2. 91-1.

[224] Cushing to Hickey, July 5, 1960. AAB, Cambridge. St. Paul's (1958-1960).

[225] Collins had graduated from the College of the Holy Cross. He had been ordained in 1940. When he returned in 1946, after almost two years in France and Germany during the war, he was appointed coadjutor at St. Paul's and chaplain to Radcliffe College. In 1965 he became pastor of St. Paul and held that position until 1971.

[226] Porras to Collins, July 29, 1960 (there are two letter with the same date). Corr. Fr Porras officers, 1956-1957 (bis). AAB, St. Paul's Parish, Box. 1.

[227] Harvard University. Records of the Dean of Harvard College : an inventory. UAIII 5.33. Harvard College (1780- ). Office of the Dean. Box 492. Harvard University Archives.

[228] Letter from the president of the HCC to the members of the Club, September 19, 1960. Corr. Fr. Porras officers, 1956-1957 (bis). AAB, St. Paul's Parish, Box. 1.

[229] *Ibid.*

[230] When he left the chaplaincy, Fr. Porras stayed for another year in Boston. Then in September 62, he moved to Pamplona (Spain) where he worked to obtain his doctorate in Canon Law from the University of Navarre. In April 1964 he returned to the United States and this time, settled in New York. At the end of 1965 he moved to Mexico where he carried out both his priestly and academic work. Outstanding among his publications are *Iglesia y Estado en Nueva Vizcaya (1562-1821)*, Pamplona, Universidad de Navarra, 1966, 695 pp. "La Frontera con los Indios de la Nueva Vizcaya en el S. XVII", "El nuevo descubrimiento de San José del Parral". "El gobierno de la ciudad de México en el siglo XVI" for which he won the City of Mexico Prize, and "Personas y lugares en la ciudad de México en el siglo XVI". One of the reviewers of his works has written: "William Porras Muñoz is one of the persons with the most profound knowledge of the history of Northwest Mexico" Rosales, Alfonso Martínez, Don Guillermo Porras Muñoz, *Historia Mexicana*, 1 July 1988, Vol. 38 (1), pp.171-172. He was a member of the Academia Nacional de Historia y



Geografía in 1975. In 1987 he received the prize “Tomás Valles.” And the Academia Mexicana de la Historia, corresponding with la Real de Madrid, received him as a Miembro de Número, October 21, 1986. He died in México City, June 28, 1988. Cf. <http://www.acadmexhistoria.org.mx>.