

The Early Days of Opus Dei in Boston As Recalled by the First Generation (1946-1956)

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Abstract: *This is a documentary account of the first trips members of Opus Dei made to Boston and Cambridge, Mass. (U.S.) and the subsequent development of the apostolate there, primarily among students and professors at Harvard University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology. It covers the period between 1946 and 1956. The primary sources are personal recollections of those who met the Work there. These are supplemented by relevant material from Opus Dei's internal publications and selected secondary works which provide the necessary cultural, intellectual, and religious context.*

Keywords: *Josemaría Escrivá – Opus Dei – Harvard University – Massachusetts Institute of Technology – Trimount – 1946-1956*

Abstract: *È la relazione del primo viaggio dei membri dell'Opus Dei alla volta di Boston e di Cambridge, Mass. (U.S.), e del successivo sviluppo del lavoro apostolico in primo luogo tra gli studenti e i professori dell'università di Harvard e del Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Il periodo preso in esame va dal 1946 al 1956. Le fonti primarie sono i ricordi personali di coloro che conobbero l'Opera in questi luoghi, completati da informazioni tratte dalle pubblicazioni interne dell'Opus Dei, e selezionate da altre opere che forniscono il necessario contesto culturale, intellettuale e religioso.*

Keywords: *Josemaría Escrivá – Opus Dei – Università di Harvard – Massachusetts Institute of Technology – Trimount – 1946-1956*

INTRODUCTION

Concept and Method

The object of this study is to present in detail the beginning of the apostolate of the men of Opus Dei (Work of God) in Boston and Cambridge, Massachusetts. It relies primarily on first person accounts, specifically the recollections—obtained between April and December 2004—of 24 of Opus Dei’s faithful who helped to establish the first men’s centers, Trimount House and, later, Elmbrook Residence, in metropolitan Boston. Their recollections were obtained mainly in writing, but also through oral interviews¹. Contemporary articles and secondary materials provide supplementary and contextual information.

As most of the on-campus activities in the first years took place at Harvard University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.), this study focuses primarily on them. Some early residents of Trimount and Elmbrook attended other schools nearby and helped Opus Dei’s apostolate to expand in the Boston area and adjacent cities and states.

The sometimes extensive, sometimes brief recollections used in this study influence the narrative in many ways—most importantly, perhaps, in the emphasis given to persons who eventually felt a call to Opus Dei and asked for admission. But Opus Dei’s apostolic activities reached many more persons along with and through its early members. While most of those do not appear in this account, their participation helped them to live a more intense Christian life. By their own testimony in subsequent correspondence with friends in Opus

¹ Contributors of Personal Recollections:

JBa	Dr. José María (Joseph) González Barredo (deceased)
JBo	Dr. Jacques M. Bonneville, Brossard, Que., Canada
RB	Msgr. Robert P. Bucciarelli, Dublin, Ireland
JD	Rev. John P. Debicki, Washington, D.C.
PD	Rev. Paul A. Donlan, Los Angeles, Calif.
DF	Dominick (Dom) Fortunato, Media, Pa.
RF	Enrico (Rico) Fortunato, New York, N.Y.
JG	Dr. John A. Gueguen, St. Louis, Mo.
DH	Dennis M. Helming, Washington, D.C.
MK	Rev. Malcolm Kennedy, New York City
JLo	John Cecil Loria, Reston, Va.
HM	Henry Hardinge Menzies, New Rochelle, N.Y.
JM	Rev. José Luis (Joseph) Múzquiz (deceased)
GR	Msgr. George M. Rossman, Sydney, Australia
CS	Dr. Carl B. Schmitt, Jr., Washington, D.C.
WS	Rev. William H. Stetson, Washington, D.C.
IV	Ismael Virto, Washington, D.C.
RY	Rev. Robert L. Yoest, Lagos, Nigeria

Dei, many continued to benefit from the formation they received as residents or as visitors to Trimount House and Elmbrook, at activities the members of Opus Dei organized on campus, or simply from personal conversations.

Even at the time it would have been difficult or impossible to describe and calibrate the effects of all those apostolic efforts. It is not surprising, then, if many people merge into the background as this story is told fifty years later, while the recollections it weaves together come to life once again as their authors recall incidents in their own lives and in the lives of others with whom they associated².

Context

A few introductory words need to be added about the period in American cultural, educational, and religious history that coincided with Opus Dei's arrival in Boston. Historians have described the 1950s as a transition from the relative confidence and optimism that followed the Second World War to a "new age" that would bring insecurity and disruption to the nation, especially higher education.

American universities—notably those in the Boston area—shared conspicuously in the postwar prosperity. "It is important to recognize [this period] as... a unique chapter in the history of American higher education, when [Harvard] clearly understood and dutifully fulfilled its mission to acquire, deposit, and propagate genuine knowledge". It was "the one moment in the twentieth century when Harvard succeeded in bringing together the best of instruction and the best of students"³.

Something comparable occurred throughout academe in that period, and in a particular way, in Catholic educational circles. The long evolution of Catholic intellectual thought seemed to reach a kind of maturity and widespread acceptance in the middle of the twentieth century.

² Another reason for concentrating on those who found in Opus Dei their lifelong calling has to do with the nature of Opus Dei and its apostolates. Their goal is to spread the message of the universal call to sanctity in the middle of the world and to provide those who wish to heed that call the formation and spiritual assistance they need to follow it in their everyday lives. There are, of course, many other paths to holiness in the world; only a small percentage of those who take seriously Christ's invitation to sanctity do so as faithful of Opus Dei. Nonetheless, it is natural that vocations to Opus Dei are likely to arise within its apostolic context and then serve to sustain its ability to spread the universal call to sanctity.

³ Brian DOMITROVIC, "Nathan Marsh Pusey: An Appreciation", *Modern Age*, 46 (summer 2004), pp. 278, 281.

Metropolitan Boston was a logical place to “put out into the deep” soon after Opus Dei’s approval by the Church made it feasible to expand the apostolate to North America. When Bishop Álvaro del Portillo, the first successor of Opus Dei’s Founder, spent several days in Boston (Feb. 23-27, 1988) during a two-month visit to the United States and Canada, he could look back on 35 years of apostolic development: “I am very happy and grateful to God to be in Boston. From here, from its universities, have come people who did great good for your country—and others less so. You can be sure that I keep them very close to my heart”⁴. While in Boston, Bishop del Portillo prayed at the grave of Father José Luis Múzquiz (Father Joseph, as he was known in America), referring to him as “a solid foundation for the work of Opus Dei in this country”. Father Múzquiz was the first priest of Opus Dei to celebrate Mass in Boston’s first center (Tri-mount House, Christmas Eve, 1953).

In the 1950s the Boston metropolitan area numbered about three million inhabitants, most of them members of large families descended from Irish, Italian, German, and Portuguese immigrants, and dozens of other European, American, and Asian nationalities, along with a growing number of African Americans. Catholics comprised nearly fifty percent of the population and were immersed in the city’s cultural, professional, social, and political life; parishes with schools staffed by religious men and women were prominent in every neighborhood. It had been many generations since the first French Canadian bishop and priests arrived in the 18th century (Today two million Catholics live in greater Boston, about half of the four million total).

The Charles River, scene of recreational and competitive rowing, sculling, and sailing, separates the city of Boston from Cambridge, a community first settled at the same time as Boston in 1630. It was named for Cambridge, England, where its Puritan founders had studied. In 1950, the population of 120,000 ranged from distinguished professors to recent immigrants and included thousands of international students⁵. Some of those professors and students would

⁴ General Archive of the Prelature (AGP), Sec. P04 1988, p. 538.

⁵ Catholic families began to settle in Cambridge in the early nineteenth century; their numbers were greatly augmented by Irish immigrants in the 1830s and ‘40s. The first parish, St. John’s (later Sacred Heart) opened in 1842. St. Peter’s followed in 1848, and then St. Paul’s, near Harvard Square (converted from a Congregational meetinghouse in 1873). The original St. Paul’s was replaced in 1923 by an imposing Italian Romanesque structure. The pastor, Msgr. Augustine F. Hickey (1884-1965), was in his 40-year tenure when the first members of Opus Dei arrived at Harvard. *A History of St. Paul’s Church*, <www.stpaulparish.org/historytxt.html> [visited on April 30, 2005]; Jeffrey WILLS (ed.), *The Catholics of Harvard Square*, Petersham, Mass., St. Bede’s Publications, 1993, p. 165.

play a prominent role in starting Opus Dei centers in the United States and other countries⁶.

An Areopagus

Karol Cardinal Wojtyla came to Cambridge in the summer of 1976 to lecture on medieval Polish mysticism in the Harvard Divinity School⁷. He returned to Boston Common just three years later as Pope John Paul II during his first pastoral visit to the United States (Oct. 1, 1979). Later he began to use the concept “Areopagus” to indicate concentrations of intellectual and cultural influence like Cambridge where he thought a missionary outreach by members of the Church was especially needed: “After preaching in a number of places, St. Paul arrived in Athens, where he went to the Areopagus and proclaimed the Gospel in language appropriate to and understandable in those surroundings. At that time the Areopagus represented the cultural center of the learned people of Athens, and today it can be taken as a symbol of the new sectors in which the Gospel must be proclaimed”⁸.

Four years later the Pope reiterated: “The more the West is becoming estranged from its Christian roots, the more it is becoming missionary territory, taking the form of many different ‘areopagi’”. The younger generation must play a key role in this new evangelization, he added⁹.

Fifty years earlier, José María González Barredo (Joseph, as he was known in the United States), was the first of Opus Dei’s members to arrive in the North American “areopagi” (1946). Barredo visited a number of cities, including Boston, before taking up residence in Chicago to prepare for the stable opening of the apostolate three years later when Father Múzquiz and Salvador Martínez Ferigle arrived from Spain. The first residence, Woodlawn, opened near the University of Chicago in September 1949 to begin the apostolate there and at nearby Illinois Institute of Technology.

⁶ Opus Dei is interested in spreading the universal call to sanctity among people of every profession and social position. In places where Opus Dei has begun to reach mature stature, a large percentage of its members are working class people with no particular educational attainments. When Opus Dei starts in a country, however, it concentrates at first on the college educated because of their ability to assimilate its message and pass it on quickly to people of all social strata.

⁷ Jeffrey WILLS, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

⁸ JOHN PAUL II, Litt. enc. *Redemptoris missio*, Dec. 7, 1990, n. 37, AAS 83 (1991), p. 284.

⁹ JOHN PAUL II, Ep. Ap. *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, Nov. 10, 1994, nn. 57-58, AAS 87 (1995), pp. 39-40. As if by anticipation of those visits of Pope John Paul II in 1976 and 1979, a frieze of St. Paul preaching to the Athenians was placed in the parish church adjacent to Harvard—St. Paul’s—during its construction in the early 1920s.

Opus Dei's apostolate expanded to Boston in 1952. Besides Harvard and M.I.T., eighty more colleges and universities attract thousands of students from throughout the United States and the world to metropolitan Boston—all the more reason, as Bishop del Portillo observed, for Opus Dei to work with the young people there.

THE FIRST STEPS—1946-53

Joseph Barredo

José María González Barredo visited Boston shortly after his arrival in the United States in March 1946 while searching for a place to use a three-year fellowship in theoretical physics granted by the *Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas*. St. Josemaría had advised him to pursue his work in the United States so that he could make contacts and investigate the possibility of establishing Opus Dei centers in American cities.¹⁰

After a brief stay in New York City, Barredo spent the rest of the month traveling, getting to know a country still celebrating the return of peacetime, only to discover that a new kind of “cold war” darkened the prospects of peace. After meeting Msgr. Francesco Lardone¹¹, a specialist in canon law, at the Apostolic Delegation in Washington, Joseph made brief stops in Chicago and Boston before deciding to make New York his research base. He took a room at Columbia

¹⁰ This section draws upon the recollections of Joseph Barredo, Mar. 12, 1977, pp. 1-8 (AGP, Sec. A, Leg. 81, Carp. 3, Exp. 3). Dr. Barredo was born in Asturias (Spain) in 1906. While studying physical chemistry at the University of Madrid, he met the Founder of Opus Dei and became one of its first members on Feb. 11, 1933, four years after its founding (Barredo, like the others who came from Spain to start Opus Dei in the U.S., was what Opus Dei refers to as a “numerary member”, i.e. someone whose vocation includes apostolic celibacy and who normally, although not always, lives in a center of Opus Dei together with other numeraries. The majority of Opus Dei faithful are “supernumeraries”, whose vocation does not involve a commitment to celibacy and who normally live with their families). After the harrowing experience of the Civil War in Madrid, Barredo resumed his teaching and research at the University of Zaragoza. He is remembered by early members of Opus Dei in the U.S. as a sprightly, eternally optimistic man, often with a song on his lips, undaunted in approaching people on the street, in public transit, and especially in the schools and colleges he frequented in order to meet colleagues and students. He was able to outpace younger persons even after a train accident in Chicago (1967) left him with a leg prosthesis, which he designed himself. “Joseph delighted in conversation and often spoke about St. Josemaría and the early history of Opus Dei”. After helping to develop the apostolate in Chicago, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C., he returned to Spain in the mid 1980s and died in Pamplona in 1993. Recollections of Dr. John Gueguen; hereafter JG.

¹¹ Msgr. Lardone (1887-1980) became a Bishop when he began his long career as Papal Nuncio in Caribbean and Latin American countries in 1949 (cfr. *Annuario Pontificio* 1979, p. 789).

University's International House and began to meet faculty members. Among them was historian Carlton J.H. Hayes¹², former U.S. Ambassador to Spain, who alerted him to the Boston area's superior research facilities in his field.

Barredo followed this advice and made a trip to Harvard and M.I.T. He was warmly received and given a research position in the M.I.T. physics department, where he spent the remainder of the spring and summer, residing at Graduate House. Among others he met there was a professor of chemistry from Barcelona, Dr. Amat, also doing work at M.I.T. Barredo introduced himself to archdiocesan authorities, beginning with the secretary of Archbishop Richard Cushing, Msgr. John J. Wright, who would soon become Auxiliary Bishop (June 1947). What Barredo told Msgr. Wright about Opus Dei struck a chord with him, and the future Cardinal became a loyal friend and supporter of the apostolate in the United States¹³.

In April, 1946 Barredo went to St. Benedict Center, located next to Harvard Square, to meet Father Leonard Feeney, S.J. who at the time had a large following among Catholic students and professors, and was famous for making converts. Through Father Feeney Barredo met Daniel Sargent, a well-known Catholic biographer and lecturer, who took a keen interest in Opus Dei and became one of its earliest friends and benefactors in the U.S. Father Feeney invited Barredo to speak about Isidoro Zorzano (1902-1943), one of the first members of Opus Dei, in the St. Benedict Center's lecture series. This was an occasion to meet Harvard faculty members and students, and to distribute prayer cards for private devotion of Zorzano, whose cause of canonization was about to be introduced in Madrid. Barredo had known Zorzano in the early years of Opus Dei.

¹² Professor Hayes (1882-1964), a devout Catholic historian, spent World War II as U.S. Ambassador to Spain (1942-45). He was well known as a professor and author in the field of modern European history. In 1945 he served as president of the American Historical Association (cfr. J.L. MORRISON, "Hayes, Carlton Joseph Huntley", in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Washington D.C., The Catholic University of America, vol. 6 [1967, repr. 1981], pp. 957-958).

¹³ John Joseph Wright (1909-1979) was a Bostonian who served the Archdiocese as priest and Auxiliary Bishop from 1935 to 1950. When the neighboring Worcester Diocese was created in 1950, he became its first ordinary and served there until appointed Bishop of Pittsburgh in 1959. He was elevated to Cardinal in 1969 when he became Prefect of Clergy in the Roman Curia (the first American to head a Vatican congregation). He spent the remainder of his life in Rome. Besides his service to the Church as pastor, theologian, and arbitrator, Cardinal Wright wrote several books; his discourses and addresses (1939-1969) have been published in two volumes entitled *Resonare Christum*. He was esteemed for the warmth of his personality, his witty and well-informed conversation, and his deep interest in people and in the contemporary world (cfr. D.W. WUERL, "Wright, John Joseph", in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Washington D.C., The Catholic University of America, vol. 18 (1989), p. 558).

In the fall of 1946, Barredo moved to Washington and secured a research position at the National Bureau of Standards. He remained there about a year before taking a position in the laboratory of Enrico Fermi at the University of Chicago in October 1947 (returning to Cambridge in spring 1948 as invited participant in a physics symposium at Harvard). On April 18, 1948 Barredo welcomed don Pedro Casciaro and two companions who had been sent to the U.S. by St. Josemaría to prepare the ground for Opus Dei's apostolate in North America. Barredo accompanied them on some of their visits to various cities, including Boston.

Father Joseph Múzquiz

Fr. José Luis Múzquiz was the next member of Opus Dei to visit Boston—a few days after Barredo met him and Salvador Ferigle (known in the United States as Sal, and later Father Sal) upon their arrival in New York, Feb. 17, 1949¹⁴. While Ferigle remained in New York City, Barredo accompanied Father Múzquiz to Boston, where they spent two days calling on persons Barredo had previously met, including Bishop Wright. After similar visits in Washington,

¹⁴ José Luis Múzquiz de Miguel was born near Badajoz in Extremadura (Spain) in 1912. He met Opus Dei in Madrid prior to the Civil War and asked to be admitted upon his return from Germany in 1939. He earned doctorates in civil engineering and in history from the University of Madrid. While teaching at Madrid's School of Engineering, he prepared for the priesthood under the supervision of St. Josemaría and was one of the first three members of Opus Dei to be ordained (1944). Five years later he came to the U.S. to begin the stable apostolate in Chicago and spent 13 years there as "Counselor", the head of Opus Dei in the region, and as Regional Delegate (Since Opus Dei's erection as a personal prelature in 1982, the head of Opus Dei in a region holds the title "Vicar" of the Prelate). In 1962, Father Múzquiz moved to Rome to assist the General Council of Opus Dei. Later he did pastoral work in Switzerland and Spain. He returned to the U.S. for a second period as Counselor (1976-1980) in New York City. Thereafter, he did pastoral work among lay people and priests in the Boston area. He suffered a heart attack while teaching at Arnold Hall Conference Center, Pembroke, Mass., and died nearby in Plymouth on June 21, 1983, shortly after his 70th birthday and Bishop del Portillo's first visit to the U.S. "It is easy to picture Father Joseph's bright face and spare figure, somewhat bowed in later years. There was a ready smile and word of affection or encouragement in his soft but persistent voice. His enthusiasm was contagious. His eyes sparkled with a cheerful optimism that never abated. A patient, gentle manner was his way of imitating St. Josemaría's desire to 'pass unnoticed', never wanting to cause anyone an inconvenience or ask for special consideration. His humility, childlike simplicity, naturalness, affability, industriousness, and sense of order provided a basis for tireless dedication to priestly and administrative duties. The first American members noticed these traits primarily in his preaching and conversation, and they saw him constantly making notes and keeping current a large file of information about individuals and families he tried to stay in touch with. He had the historian's propensity to preserve things for future use, and the engineer's knack of knowing what could be useful" (JG).

they rejoined Ferigle in New York and on Feb. 22 traveled by train to Chicago to begin the organized apostolate in the United States.

On numerous subsequent trips to Boston, Father Múzquiz continued to develop and broaden those initial contacts, assist with the apostolate, and become acquainted with the city, its universities, their students and professors. These trips were part of many journeys to meet people and deepen friendships wherever the apostolate would eventually spread.

The Pioneers

When the next members of Opus Dei arrived from Spain to take up residence in Boston at the beginning of 1952, a good number of persons had already learned of the Work and were hoping to see it open a center in Boston. Dr. Santiago Polo (who soon became known as Jim) was the first “permanent settler”. He took lodging near Harvard University—at 12 Ellery St. in Cambridge—in the boarding house of Mrs. Sullivan. Polo had received a two-year post-doctoral appointment to pursue research in spectroscopy at Harvard¹⁵.

A few months later, Luis Garrido (who would be known as Louie) arrived from Spain to pursue a doctorate in physics at Harvard. Garrido and Polo rented an apartment on Commonwealth Avenue in Boston, just across the Charles River from Cambridge. By then, John Loria, a married graduate student at M.I.T., had become friends with Polo, and helped find furnishings for the apartment. Loria was intrigued by the way these newcomers cheerfully reacted to the unfamiliar environment. Among other things, “they had very little to eat. Once when I went shopping with Louie, he bought only two large jars of marmalade; later I learned that bread and marmalade was their staple”¹⁶. They were on a limited budget because they were sending as much of their stipends as possible to help relieve the financial needs in Rome where construction of Opus Dei’s international headquarters was under way.

By fall 1952 Polo and Garrido had gotten to know several Harvard students including Bernard Law, the future Cardinal Archbishop of Boston, whose fluency in Spanish facilitated a friendship. Law introduced them to a number of his friends, including Bill Stetson, a junior in pre-law, and Bob Bucciarelli, a first year student in history¹⁷. Bucciarelli liked to talk with Polo and sometimes vis-

¹⁵ Recollections of John Loria; hereafter JLo. Shortly after his arrival, Polo met John’s father, Claudio, as both were returning home on a bus crossing the Harvard Bridge.

¹⁶ JLo.

¹⁷ Stetson and Law had met at the Harvard Catholic Club in fall 1950, shortly after Stetson entered Harvard College. Law introduced Stetson to other Catholic students, including Carl Schmitt, then a senior.

ited him in his lab. He recalls that one time they talked about why the Catholic Church should have schools of its own in the United States.¹⁸ During that first year, Bucciarelli also met Stetson and some of his friends, primarily through get-togethers at Adams house where Stetson was living¹⁹.

Polo and Garrido explained Opus Dei to Law. Around Christmas 1952 he decided to enter a diocesan seminary, which he did soon after his graduation in spring 1953²⁰. In later years, he jokingly attributed his decision to follow a call to the priesthood instead of to Opus Dei to a poor meal he had been served in the Commonwealth Avenue apartment²¹. Before leaving Harvard, he asked Bucciarelli to “take care of” his two Spanish friends.

Meanwhile, Loria was continuing to meet regularly with Garrido and Polo at their apartment and in his home. Loria credits his wife Maria, whom he had met on active duty in the Philippines, with having kindled in him a new commitment to practice the faith, thus laying the groundwork for what was to come. He found in his new friends’ simple, ordinary path to sanctity exactly what he had been searching for: “I had a strong feeling that this was the answer to my search... Everything Jim said about Opus Dei seemed so clear and obvious... I was already going to daily Mass, but something was missing—an overall plan for my spiritual life. My wife and I had often spoken about the need for spiritual direction for lay people... It was Our Lady who heard these pleas and answered them”²².

The Lorias had made their home in Cambridge—“by coincidence” at 13 Ellery, just across the street from Mrs. Sullivan’s boarding house—shortly after he returned from military service in 1947 to complete his program in aeronautical engineering at M.I.T. (B.S., 1950; M.S., 1952). Their third child was on the way.

One day in 1953, Loria asked Polo how many supernumerary members there were in the United States. “You would be the first one”, Polo responded. By then, Loria had met Father Múzquiz on one of his trips and was encouraged to pursue his formation. A few months later Loria decided to ask for admission. Father Múzquiz urged him, in a letter from Chicago, Nov. 6, 1953, to “talk with Jim. He will explain more things to you—and the more you know the more

¹⁸ Recollections of Msgr. Robert Bucciarelli; hereafter RB.

¹⁹ RB. Law, Stetson, Bucciarelli and others met frequently at the early Mass at St. Paul’s, the parish that served Harvard students. Several of them sang in the choir.

²⁰ Recollections of Rev. William Stetson; hereafter WS.

²¹ Recollections of Dr. Carl Schmitt; hereafter CS.

²² This section relies primarily on Loria’s recollections. These first two supernumeraries in the Eastern U.S. raised seven children; there were 30 grandchildren when Maria departed this life on Dec. 28, 2003.

you'll love it. Father Bill [Porras] is going to Boston in a few days and I'll be going a little later".

The First Residence

Polo and Garrido, assisted by John and Maria Loria, had begun sometime in 1952 to look for a suitable building to serve as a student residence but had made little progress, primarily for lack of money. The arrival in Boston of Fr. Guillermo Porras Muñoz, a recently ordained (1951) Mexican member of Opus Dei known in the United States as Father Bill, triggered a series of rapid steps that would lead to the opening of the first center of Opus Dei in the city²³.

Father Porras contacted Sol Rosenblatt, a Jewish attorney with a warm spot in his heart for Hispanic culture; Father Múzquiz had met him on an earlier trip to New York²⁴. In the course of that meeting—the start of a long friendship with Opus Dei—Rosenblatt had offered to be of any help he could.

Father Porras phoned Rosenblatt to ask whether he knew anyone who might be willing to provide a second mortgage in order to buy a house. Rosenblatt asked the logical question: "How much money do you have to start with?" One can imagine his astonishment on hearing the young priest's reply: "About a hundred dollars". But when Father Porras heard Rosenblatt's response: "Father, you can't buy a house for a hundred dollars", he retorted: "That's why we need a second mortgage". Recalling Father Múzquiz's optimism and daring, and musing to himself that Opus Dei must really be a work of God if it operated on

²³ Guillermo Porras Muñoz was born in El Paso, Tex. on July 17, 1922, into a family whose remote origins were in Chihuahua, Mexico. About 1940 he went to Mexico City to study history and jurisprudence at the National University. Advanced research took him to the Archivo General de Indias in Seville, Spain, where he met Opus Dei about 1945. Not long after converting to Catholicism (he had been an atheist), he became the first Mexican-American member of Opus Dei and went to Madrid to study philosophy and theology. While preparing for the priesthood, he added canon law to his previous studies. After helping to lay the foundations for the Opus Dei apostolate in Boston (1953-1960), Father Porras returned to Spain to complete his canon law degree, and then helped to establish the apostolate in New York City (1963-1965) before returning to Mexico City to resume his scholarly work in historical and legal studies. He died June 28, 1988. Cfr. *Romana. Bollettino della Prelatura della Santa Croce e Opus Dei*, 4 (1988), p. 167. Henry Menzies recalls Father Porras as "a tall, stately aristocrat, a real 'southerner' even before 'the South' existed. His ancestors had settled in West Texas long ago when it was still part of Mexico. When we first met, I took him to be a distant, even haughty person. But later I came to know his kindly manner toward everyone. He was famous for his quick wit and skill in saying a lot in a few words—an absolute delight to be with on any occasion. He preached fine, well-prepared homilies, and the residents all loved him—as did everyone he knew". Recollections of Henry Menzies; hereafter HM.

²⁴ Recollections of Ismael Virto; hereafter IV.

faith like that, the attorney put Father Porras in touch with a Boston colleague, Mrs. Louise Day Hicks, who might be able to help²⁵.

Mrs. Hicks, who belonged to an Irish Catholic family, was well connected and inclined to assist people in need²⁶. She met with Father Porras, was impressed by his combination of seriousness and sincerity and by the importance of his mission, and put him in touch with the chancellor of the Archdiocese, Msgr. Walter Murphy, who the very next day sent a friend of his, Mildred Baird, a realtor, to meet with Father Porras. Miss Baird, too, was ready to help this idealistic young priest who wanted to bring a Catholic presence to the secular life of the community and its universities. She was undaunted by the fact that the members of Opus Dei had so little money. It was enough to see their intentions and to know that they had come with the blessings of the Archbishop²⁷.

In late November, Ms. Baird showed Father Porras two connected town houses at 22 and 24 Marlborough St., well situated in the Back Bay a short distance from the Public Garden and just across the Charles River from Cambridge and M.I.T. Members of Opus Dei had looked at this property earlier but rejected it as too expensive. Now however, Ms. Baird offered to donate her commission on the sale as part of the down payment and Msgr. Murphy provided the rest of the down payment. With that, the bank mortgage arranged by Rosenblatt, and a second mortgage from Mrs. Hicks, they were able to purchase the adjoining houses in December 1953²⁸.

²⁵ Adding to Rosenblatt's admiring and amused astonishment, Father Porras phoned him again several months later to say that Mrs. Hicks had indeed helped find a real estate agent who had located a fine house, and that now he needed a second mortgage on another house, this one to be a women's residence. In the early 1960s, when Carl Schmitt met Rosenblatt—by then he was a cooperator of Opus Dei—Schmitt heard this story and its conclusion: "So this man bought two houses with a hundred dollars. That's got to be a work of God!" (CS). Sol A. Rosenblatt (1901-1968), a prominent New York attorney, graduated from Harvard Law School in 1924. Among his many charities, he was a generous benefactor of the New York Archdiocese, to the extent that Archbishop Terence Cooke attended his funeral in Synagogue Emmanuel. He was also of assistance in establishing the first center of Opus Dei in New York. *Recollections of Rev. Malcolm Kennedy*; hereafter MK.

²⁶ Louise Day Hicks (1916-2003), stylish wife, mother, lawyer, and public official, was a tough and courageous daughter of South Boston's Irish community, a defender of working and middle-class Bostonians whose deepest loyalties she shared. When she met Opus Dei in 1953 she was a recent graduate of Boston University Law School and partner with her brother in their father's law firm, Day and Hicks. She later served as a member of the Boston School Committee (1961-69) the U.S. House of Representatives (1970-72) and the Boston City Council (1972-78).

²⁷ Subsequently, Mildred Baird received formation in the women's center, became a member of Opus Dei, and was buried in St. Joseph's cemetery near the grave of Father Múzquiz (CS).

²⁸ About the same time, Father Múzquiz passed through Boston on his way to Spain to meet St. Josemaría and other early members at Molinoviejo, a conference center located near Segovia, Spain (Opus Dei had just observed its 25th anniversary). When Father Múzquiz informed the

This first center of Opus Dei in Boston would be called Trimount House²⁹. It comprised two 5-storey brownstones with basements that had been in use as a boarding house. The 34 rooms and 15 baths were fully furnished, although many furnishings were so dilapidated they had to be discarded³⁰. The first floor had high ceilings, and a long, broad staircase led to the second floor landing that opened into what would become the oratory in front and the study room in back.

The First Mass

Boston's Archbishop, Richard J. Cushing, was "enthusiastic about the project and wrote to say that he saw a 'real need' for the apostolate of the Work and wanted to bless the house and say the first Mass"³¹. That ceremony was not to take place until things were better settled—in October 1954, after the oratory was properly installed.

Holy Mass was celebrated for the first time in Trimount House on Christmas Eve, 1953 by Father Múzquiz, who traveled from Chicago for the occasion. It took place in the study room and was attended by several former residents of the boarding house who had stayed on, students from four universities, and early friends and benefactors, some of whom provided sacred vessels and vestments. The universities represented were Harvard, M.I.T., Boston University, and Tufts University Medical College³². As a reredos, John Loria's sister-in-law, Joan Loria, painted a large copy of a classical painting of the Flight into Egypt³³.

Father Porras's observations are reported in a written account, which concludes:

Founder of the plans for a student residence in Boston, "he told me that we should move forward. He viewed with enthusiasm the Work's extension to Boston, as he would also do a few years later when we were ready to begin in Washington". Recollections of Rev. Joseph Múzquiz; hereafter JM, pp. 24-25 (AGP, Sec. A, Leg. 81, Carp. 3, Exp. 1).

²⁹ Msgr. John J. Murray, one of the first priests Father Porras met through Bishop Wright, told Carl Schmitt that it was he who suggested that name. Msgr. Murray had been pastor of St. Paul's in Harvard Square and chaplain of the Catholic Club from 1950 to 1952. In 1953 he was Rector of St. John's, the Archdiocesan Seminary. "Msgr. Murray, along with Msgr. Larry Riley (later an Auxiliary Bishop of Boston) were among our most steadfast friends in the U.S. and faithful in their friendship in difficult times". Recollections of Rev. John Debicki; hereafter JD.

³⁰ "Many evenings and weekends were necessary to dispose of the old furniture out the rear windows, and it took numerous trips to the dump late at night to get rid of the mess that accumulated in the alley" (JLo).

³¹ AGP, Sec. P03 II-1954, pp. 40-42.

³² AGP, Sec. P01 II-1954, p. 67.

³³ JLo.

Some new fellows are coming around, and the apostolate increases day by day as we are able to give them the attention they deserve. From now on, our work... will be more stable. Among those who are closest, we are thinking we can start days of recollection. We have spoken with them, and soon they will form a select group... It's a great feeling to be getting started in the city of Boston, although we were already here for some time. Trimount House is a great step forward in the apostolate—made possible by everyone's prayers. It won't be long before you hear more news from us, and it will fill you with joy to see how things are developing in the old capital on the three hills³⁴.

GETTING ORGANIZED—1954

Trimount House

Acquiring the house was a major step forward, but much remained to be done both to refurbish it and to organize the apostolic activities. José Manuel Barturen (first known in the U.S. as Mel and later as Manolo) arrived from Spain early in 1954 to serve as director³⁵. About the same time, Dick Rieman arrived from Chicago to help put the house in order and meet students. A recent graduate of DePaul University and a Navy veteran, Rieman had become the first member of Opus Dei in the United States on July 15, 1950. After six months in Boston, he moved on to Rome to spend three years in Opus Dei's international center of formation, the Roman College of the Holy Cross³⁶. After his ordination in 1958 he returned to Trimount as "Father Dick", the second chaplain of the residence. It was the beginning of his long and continuing association with the apostolate in Boston.

³⁴ AGP, Sec. P03 II-1954, p. 43.

³⁵ Born of Basque parents in Havana on Jan. 1, 1926, José Manuel Barturen Palacios met Opus Dei while studying engineering at the University of Madrid. After a year at Trimount, he began an import-export business in New York City and helped lay the foundations for the apostolate in that city. He died there of a heart attack on Nov. 22, 1998 after seeing several centers open in the city, including the regional commission of Opus Dei, Murray Hill Place, located in the heart of Manhattan at 34th and Lexington. His contemporaries remember his wry smile, carefully measured speech, and undying loyalty to Basque traditions. Loria describes him as "a princely sort of man" (JLo, IV); cfr. *Romana. Bulletin of the Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei*, 14 (1998), p. 316.

³⁶ Temporarily located in Villa Tevere—the center of general council of Opus Dei—, the Roman College of the Holy Cross, established in 1948, was receiving students from the countries where Opus Dei's apostolate was established—twelve at that time.

It was beyond their means to hire professional labor, except for the most indispensable tasks such as plumbing³⁷. To do most of the work, the residents and their friends had to acquire new skills—restoring and repairing used furniture, masonry, painting, and varnishing. Throughout the spring of 1954, Barturen, Father Porras, Garrido, Polo, and Loria put a number of helpers to work. These included several Harvard students, among them Bucciarelli and Stetson³⁸.

Pedro (Peter) Ejarque arrived in the summer from Spain to join the work effort. Even Father José Ramón Madurga Lacalle (known in the U.S. as Father Ray), was pressed into service as he passed through Boston on his way to Chicago (he became the second Counselor of Opus Dei in the United States the following year). As Father Múzquiz put it, “since they were in a hurry to finish the remodeling, they greeted him with one hand and handed him a paintbrush with the other”³⁹.

The remodeling was well under way by late spring, but greatly hampered, as usual, by lack of money. Fund raising was a high priority. Many people were invited to visit the residence, in the hope that they would become interested enough to help financially. In April a prestigious Boston engineer introduced more than a dozen business associates to Trimount and encouraged them to help. They gathered in the sparsely furnished living room, shared a meal in the dining room, and before an informal get-together were given a tour of the house. Such “get-acquainted” sessions were repeated several times that year with a growing number of friends and benefactors⁴⁰.

One of the people met in that way was a used furniture dealer. He personally selected items he thought would give the residence an agreeable tone and a few days later returned with a truckload of dining room and parlor chairs, curtains, and other furnishings. Then another truck brought a dining room table, six sofas, and small items such as vases. “When we visit the store”, a contemporary account narrates, “we follow this procedure: ‘That piece is nice’. ‘Can you use it in the residence?’ ‘It might look nice in the hall’. ‘Well then, take it’”. Similar “negotiations” took place at other used furniture stores. Prices came down, and some pieces were donated: “If you don’t mind, we’ll send these right over”⁴¹.

Sometimes help came from entirely unexpected quarters, apparently chance acquaintances whom they had no reason to expect help from. These

³⁷ Archbishop Cushing paid many of those indispensable expenses: “‘Send me the bill’, he told Father Porras” (JM).

³⁸ RB.

³⁹ JM, CS.

⁴⁰ AGP, Sec. P03 IV-1954, pp. 73-76.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-21.

were referred to as “angels”. One owned a plumbing company. Contacted for assistance in stopping leaks, he replaced defective bathroom fixtures at his own expense. Another was the president of an advertising company that maintains billboards along highways and on buildings. When they phoned him he promised to send painters, but then a late August hurricane damaged 340 billboards they had to repair or replace. Nevertheless, three African-American painters volunteered to help at night after their regular hours.

One way or another, when the fall semester began in September, Tri-mount had been renovated and refurnished by the people of the Work, friends, and “angels”. “Angels” also found new residents—among them, Jean Duvivier (from Quebec), Vincent Solomita, and Lou Mazzola.

A major source of support was a “ladies auxiliary” that formed under the enthusiastic leadership of Mrs. Helen McManus and Mrs. Jim Fitzgerald; eventually it had about forty members, some well known in the city. Among them were the professional women who had found the house and begun furnishing it—Ms. Baird and Mrs. Hicks. Bishop Wright’s mother was also among them, and lived out her days as an active cooperator⁴². Each member asked friends for \$50 contributions (the equivalent of \$500 today). One of them approached the owner of a factory and several lumberyards in Boston. She was a widow supporting the education of ten nieces and nephews, but she agreed to make a large contribution for the oratories and sent over an adviser on chapel installations (Mr. Hayes)⁴³.

Virginia Paine and several other ladies contacted the priests who supplied vestments for Mass and Benediction, sacred vessels, altars and benches. These priests became lifelong friends of Opus Dei: Msgrs. Murphy, Murray, Lawrence Riley, and Thomas Riley. Msgr. Murphy was chancellor, and Msgr. Thomas Riley rector of St. John’s Seminary⁴⁴ (Both Thomas and Lawrence Riley subsequently became auxiliary bishops⁴⁵).

Spiritual activities had begun while remodeling was still in progress. A day of recollection took place on Sunday Feb. 7, 1954 for residents and their friends and continued thereafter each month⁴⁶. In midyear, the first American edition of *Camino (The Way)* appeared and immediately became an important resource. Father Múzquiz was the chief translator, and William Doyle Gilligan,

⁴² JM.

⁴³ AGP, Sec. P03 VI-1954, pp. 41-44.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-21.

⁴⁵ Cfr. *Anuario Pontificio* 1979, p. 697.

⁴⁶ AGP, Sec. P03 II-1954, p. 43.

first director of Scepter Press, saw it through publication⁴⁷. This first book of St. Josemaría to become available in English was the “primer” of the spirit of Opus Dei for the young Americans who came into contact with the Work in the early years. A corrected second printing was published in 1956⁴⁸.

Monthly evenings of recollection for married men began in September for people already in touch with the Work. One of the participants was Jacques Bonneville, a graduate of McGill University in Montréal who had come to M.I.T. from Quebec in September 1950 with his wife and young children to pursue doctoral studies in mechanical engineering. “I first learned of Opus Dei when Father Múzquiz gave a talk at M.I.T.’s Newman Club in 1953. A friend who accompanied me, Roger Langlois, spoke for me as well when he commented, ‘I could go for this if I weren’t already married’. I was set straight on that score when I met John Loria in 1954. He invited me to the evening of recollection where I met Father Bill Porras. He was always cheerful, and had a fine sense of humor”⁴⁹.

The Official Opening

The formal beginning of the apostolate in Boston took place on October 19, 1954 when Trimount House was inaugurated and the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the oratory. The events of that day were reported in a written report. The account is worth reproducing at length:

Opening day had been anticipated with great eagerness. Just a few hours earlier, the house seemed to be in complete disarray. But when the actual moment came, everything was sparkling. The preparation had occupied us for months, but on October 18 a thousand details still awaited attention—even in the oratory, as we moved the altar forward in order to hang a drapery behind the reredos [in the bay window of the former ballroom]. A little later in the day the benches arrived, and a couple of men laid the carpet. A seat and a kneeler for the Archbishop were placed on the Gospel side... Another kneeler was placed on the Epistle side for the Counselor [Father Múzquiz] who came from Chicago to be with us.

⁴⁷ Born in Limerick, Ireland, Bill Gilligan immigrated to Chicago with family members and served in the Korean War. In 1953 he organized Scepter Press in Chicago (in conjunction with Scepter Dublin) and served as its director during its first two decades. In the early 1970s he began *Lumen Christi* publications in Houston, Tex., where he died on Apr. 21, 2004 at the age of 76.

⁴⁸ An early comment on *The Way* was done by Bishop Wright, shortly after he was appointed ordinary of the newly created Worcester diocese: “I’ve read *The Way* carefully and find it to be a profound and practical presentation of a way that will bring those who follow it close to Our Lord”. AGP, Sec. P03 XII-1954, p. 75.

⁴⁹ Recollections of Dr. Jacques Bonneville; hereafter JBo.

Carnations and roses graced the oratory, living room, and library—the gift of a Jewish florist. The oratory was resplendent. Above the altar shone our ivory 15th-century Gothic triptych—a gift of Daniel Sargent, one of our first cooperators. He had received it from the previous Archbishop, Cardinal O’Connell, who had received it in his turn from a member of the Spanish royal family. An ejaculation in gold letters outlined in crimson had been added: on the upper part “*Sancta Maria*” [Holy Mary] and on the sides “*Spes Nostra, Sedes Sapientiae*” [Our Hope, Seat of Wisdom]⁵⁰.

The Archbishop had been looking forward to this occasion ever since we acquired the house. As he was not feeling well, it took a special effort for him to celebrate this Mass for our friends and benefactors, especially the ladies auxiliary. The doors leading to the hallway were opened, and from there residents and students attending our spiritual activities sang the Mass responses⁵¹.

At the end of Mass, the Archbishop said: “I met Opus Dei in Spain 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. The reality we see here only increases that hope; it is just a beginning”⁵². Archbishop Cushing

⁵⁰ This exquisite piece of art with 45 carved miniature figures of scenes from the life of Christ and his Mother set within ornate borders bearing additional ejaculations was moved to the men’s center of Opus Dei in suburban Chestnut Hill in 1974 when demographic changes in the Back Bay ended the 20-year life of Trimount House. A recent appraisal identified it as a 19th century copy of the Renaissance original (CS, JD). Daniel Sargent (1890-1987), historian and writer, was descended from a prominent Massachusetts family of writers and artists. In midlife he converted to the Catholic faith. Recalling his initial meeting with Joseph Barredo, he was happy to learn of plans for a residence and eager to make a contribution. He became a lifelong friend and cooperator of Opus Dei and often received Trimount residents at his home a little west of Cambridge in South Natick for long conversations sprinkled with historical anecdotes. His principal contribution to Opus Dei’s apostolate in the U.S. resulted from Barredo’s suggestion that Isidoro Zorzano be added to Sargent’s series of biographical studies of lay Catholics he considered significant in the life of the Church. After *God’s Engineer* was published (Scepter Press, 1954), he promoted private devotion to Zorzano in Boston and Chicago. Among the early members of the Work in Boston, probably Carl Schmitt and Henry Menzies knew him best. On a trip to Rome he met St. Josemaría. His journal entry states simply, “Today I met a saint” (HM).

⁵¹ AGP, Sec. P03 X-1954, pp. 44-48. Msgr. Bucciarelli adds: “Father Bill had asked if we could get the director of St. Paul’s choir, Ted Marier, and a few student members to sing the Mass, which we did”. These included Bill Stetson (RB).

⁵² Bishop Wright had escorted the Archbishop during the 1948 Holy Year of St. James. Archbishop (later Cardinal) Joseph Ritter of St. Louis was in their company, and likewise eager to help Opus Dei establish a residence in his city. In 1956 he granted the *venia* for Wespine House to open with his assistance. Richard James Cushing was born in South Boston into a family of Irish immigrants in 1895, was educated at Boston College and St. John’s Seminary, ordained as a priest in 1921, as auxiliary bishop in 1939, and appointed the sixth ordinary of Boston in 1944. He was enrolled in the College of Cardinals in 1958. He died in 1970 and is buried in the

went on to speak of the country's need for a Catholic culture and said to those present, some of them his personal friends: "There is a tremendous urgency for the Work here in America. I am very grateful for the help you have given, and I expect you will continue helping"⁵³.

The contemporary account continues:

After Mass we went to the dining room for breakfast. The Archbishop kept speaking of the great mission Opus Dei has begun in the United States. In the afternoon there was an open house for 300 to 400 guests—including officials of the archdiocese and the city⁵⁴. The ladies auxiliary arranged everything: the table with its elegant tablecloth, and as a centerpiece an antique silver vase filled with red roses. One of the ladies brought a crystal bowl and encouraged her friends to leave donations; eventually everyone made a contribution. The residents guided our friends through the house in small groups amidst many compliments. That day everyone was drawn closer to the Work.

For many days we received phone calls and visits from people wanting to donate articles for the various rooms. One of the callers was Msgr. [Walter] Murphy: "The chalice Mrs. McManus gave you needs a rich ciborium in the same style. Tell me the price; I want it to be in my name". A retired professor offered books for the library. An article with photos appeared in the press. And so our residence has officially opened with residents from five universities. One of the visitors spoke for all of us when she told her young son, "I want you to remember this day well because one day perhaps you will also live in this house when you are older and love God more"⁵⁵.

A New Chaplain for Harvard

In the course of Trimount's inaugural reception, Archbishop Cushing appointed Father Porras chaplain of Harvard's Catholic Club. At the time, Har-

Portiuncula Chapel of the St. James Fathers in suburban Hanover. Cardinal Cushing became one of the most visible (and audible) Irish Americans of his era, well known to Americans of all faiths because of his raspy accent, salty language, and humorous quips (Cfr. T.F. CASEY, "Boston, Archdiocese of Bostoniensis", in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Washington D.C., The Catholic University of America, vol. 2 [1967, repr. 1981], pp. 722-723). After his initial visit to Trimount, he maintained a lively interest in the progress of the apostolate, meeting periodically with the director and chaplain.

⁵³ Among the reception guests were two faculty members of Gaztelueta, a high school in Bilbao, Spain, the first corporate work of apostolate of Opus Dei in the field of secondary education. They had come to the U.S. to visit high schools. One of them commented on the Archbishop's enthusiasm for Opus Dei: "It was evident how pleased he was to be with us. His naturalness and trusting affection clearly showed how much he loves us and how well he understands us". AGP, Sec. P03 X-1954, pp. 65-71.

⁵⁴ The dignitaries included Bishop Wright (JM).

⁵⁵ AGP, Sec. P03 X-1954, pp. 44-48.

vard had about 400 Catholics among its approximately 4400 undergraduates⁵⁶. Their spiritual care was entrusted to a Catholic Club, Harvard's equivalent of the Newman Clubs that exist on the campuses of most secular universities in the United States. The Club was housed in St. Paul's parish. From 1952 to 1954, the chaplain, Rev. Vincent McQuade OSA, had not been able to function effectively since he was simultaneously president of Merrimack College, 90 miles away in Andover, New Hampshire. When he resigned from the chaplaincy in spring 1954, the Club was virtually defunct⁵⁷.

Several influential Catholics, including Mrs. McManus and Mrs. Fitzgerald had previously observed to the Archbishop that Father Porras would make a good chaplain⁵⁸. Now at the reception, the appropriate moment seemed to have arrived. According to Msgr. Bucciarelli, "Mrs. McManus, whose son was a classmate of mine, turned to another classmate, Leo Zavatone, and me: 'Wouldn't it be nice if Father Porras were chaplain of the Harvard Catholic Club?' Upon receiving our affirmative reply and without further hesitation, she turned to the Archbishop and asked him to make the appointment"⁵⁹. Dr. Schmitt adds: "Spontaneously, on impulse—the Archbishop's characteristic way of acting—he walked up to Father Múzquiz and asked if he would like to be appointed; slightly flustered, Father Múzquiz replied, 'I think you mean that priest across the room'. Then the Archbishop went up to Father Porras and repeated the proposal"⁶⁰. Upon his agreement, the Archbishop made the appointment on the spot⁶¹.

⁵⁶ Harvard's total enrollment for fall 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.

⁵⁷ Archbishop Cushing was especially anxious to find a suitable chaplain because of tension at Harvard and throughout the Boston area due to the controversies surrounding Father Leonard Feeney SJ. A brilliant thinker and speaker, he had won many converts and aroused much interest in the Church. But around 1950 he began to preach an extreme version of the doctrine that there is no salvation outside the Church, concluding that anyone who is not a formal member is consigned to hell. Father Feeney was excommunicated in 1952, but in 1954 he still exerted considerable influence among Boston Catholics. He was reconciled with the Church before his death. Cfr. T.F. CASEY, *op. cit.*, p. 724; *Ep. S. Officii ad archiep. Bostoniensem*, Aug. 8, 1949, in DH 3866-3873.

⁵⁸ CS.

⁵⁹ RB.

⁶⁰ CS. Another witness, Father Stetson, a law student that fall, gives a terse summary: "The Archbishop spoke to the Counselor, who gave permission, and Father Porras was named chaplain" (WS).

⁶¹ Given the role it played in the development of the apostolate of Opus Dei in the early years at Trimount and on the Harvard campus, some background on the Catholic Club is pertinent. From the beginning it was largely an initiative of undergraduates. Notice of the intention to form an organization for Catholic students first circulated on the Harvard campus in May 1893. In the first two years, the nine co-founders succeeded in enrolling 175 students, perhaps half of

Father Porras lost no time beginning his duties as Harvard's Catholic chaplain, although he had no office on campus at first. He also increased his efforts to acquaint himself with the University. At the December meeting of the Club's officers (the president was Leo Zavatone) he helped them lay plans for the new academic year. Among other things it was decided to begin a monthly day of recollection at Trimount, separate from the scheduled activities of the house⁶².

the College's Catholic students. Many of them distinguished themselves in later life, whether in religious life or as leaders in secular professions. Jeffrey WILLS, *op. cit.*, pp. 70, 75, 77, 81. Catholics were gaining recognition at Harvard in other ways, as well. On Apr. 1, 1894, an alumnus, Rev. Peter J. O'Callaghan '88, a Paulist, became the first priest to lead Sunday prayers at Harvard. A year later he wrote: "Harvard is the most splendid and richest field for missionary effort that can be found in the United States. It is a field wide open and inviting us to enter". Peter J. O'CALLAGHAN CSP, "Catholics at Harvard", *The Catholic Family Annual* (1895), pp. 74-80. The purposes of the Club were "to promote the religious interests of the Catholic students at Harvard and to quicken the spirit of Christianity among all the students" by inviting prominent speakers to address monthly meetings and to hold biennial public lectures. When Phillips Brooks House opened in 1900 for use by student organizations, the Club began to meet there. John LaFarge '01 played a leading role in that respect; he became a well-known member of the Society of Jesus and the first Catholic Duddleian lecturer at Harvard (1947). In 1904 he gave this summary of Catholic life at Harvard: While students suffer no discrimination, there is an "all-pervading indifferentism" and "erroneous teaching in history and philosophy" that endangers their faith. Jeffrey WILLS, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-78, 80, 83. The Catholic Club had no chaplain nor formal connection to St. Paul's parish, where most Catholic students attended Mass, until Rev. John Farrell, an assistant there, was appointed chaplain in 1901. He later became an active promoter of the Newman apostolate at secular universities. Subsequently there were eleven chaplains, six of them serving concurrently as pastor or assistant at St. Paul's, until the Harvard and Radcliffe Catholic Clubs merged in 1960, upon the departure of Father Porras. When the Harvard house system went into operation in the 1930s and became the dominant influence in student life, the Catholic Club had been in decline for a decade and by 1933 was virtually assimilated into St. Paul's parish. Its chaplain at the time, Rev. Augustine Hickey (assistant, later pastor) informed Boston's Archbishop O'Connell that Harvard's indifference to religion was "truly a matter to cause concern", for it was keeping Catholic students "on the defensive" and making it difficult for the chaplain "to keep in touch" with them. Yet that indifference had another side: Rev. (now Cardinal) Avery Dulles SJ, '40, observed that official religious neutrality was a contributing factor to the growing number of conversions and priestly vocations at Harvard. It also permitted Harvard presidents to begin inviting prominent Catholic laymen to participate in the university's corporate life, and with the advent of summer school, many students and faculty members from Catholic colleges were attracted to Harvard, including priests—one of them, the Servant of God Fulton J. Sheen of Catholic University (1927-30). *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87, 89-90, 91-92. During Cardinal Law's undergraduate years (1949-53, immediately preceding Father Porras's chaplaincy), the Catholic apostolate at Harvard "was practically all student generated. We had no center, no full-time priest, no staff. We did it mostly ourselves, out of conviction, and sharing the faith with people around us". In his senior year, Law served as the Club's vice-president and sang in St. Paul's student choir with Stetson. *Ibid.*, p. 169, quoting remarks delivered at Elmbrook University Residence, Oct. 13, 1989.

⁶² AGP, Sec. P01 XII-1954, p. 84.

The Harvard Setting

Harvard is the oldest center of higher education in the United States (1636). Originally an undergraduate College, graduate and professional schools were added in 1870 and thereafter. Like most American universities, Harvard experienced unprecedented growth in every measurable statistic in the twenty years following World War II. Already the country's most prestigious and wealthiest university, a new dynamic began to drive Harvard in the early '50s—precisely when the apostolate of Opus Dei arrived to help give it direction and substance in the lives of many students and professors. A recent historian has termed Harvard in that period an “Eden, a truly collegial place where the life of the mind was valued and everything needful was at hand”⁶³.

In spite of growing ethnic and religious diversity during the 1950s, a distinctive self-conscious socio-academic culture still characterized the student body. According to one historian, “the prevailing social style was polite arrogance—sparse, dry, cautious, and angular... Most undergraduates of the fifties and early sixties appear to have reveled in the heady mix of high status and social and intellectual vitality”⁶⁴. A “proudly male” undergraduate population was complemented by a feminine presence at neighboring Radcliffe College (its gradual absorption into Harvard began in the 1950s at the graduate level, and was completed in 1999). Admission of women to Harvard's graduate and professional programs began in the 1950s, and to the faculty in the 1960s.

When the apostolate of Opus Dei began at Harvard, Catholics accounted for 12% of the student population in a largely Protestant environment (52%)—a smaller minority even than those with no religious affiliation (20%) and Jewish students (15%). The religious environment had gradually evolved over three centuries from strict adherence to Congregational (Calvinist) tenets through a long period of Unitarianism (a softer and more tolerant form of Protestantism) to the semi-dogmatic secular humanism of today. Under President Charles W. Eliot (1869-1909) “the last vestige of the Puritan seminary disappeared”; compulsory chapel became voluntary and Harvard's original crest (*Veritas – Christo et Ecclesia*) was simplified to a purposely ambiguous “*Veritas*”⁶⁵.

Catholics steadily gained intellectual respect at Harvard throughout the 19th century and into the 20th. As at many secular colleges in America, many

⁶³ John T. BETHELL, *Harvard Observed: An Illustrated History of the University in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1998, p. 210.

⁶⁴ Morton and Phyllis KELLER, *Making Harvard Modern: The Rise of America's University*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 276, 290-291, 297.

⁶⁵ Jeffrey WILLS, *op. cit.*, p. 75; Harvard archive, courtesy of archivist Marvin Hightower, June 1, 2004.

conversions took place there, and some converts became scholars of the first rank. By mid 20th century, significant shifts had occurred both in Protestant and in Catholic conceptions of higher education and its relationship to the study and practice of religion. A 1957 study by the Harvard Student Council found that the institution “nurtures a vague but pungent faith of its own which can be characterized roughly as humanitarian, democratic, and scientific”; within that context, formal “religion has largely shifted for itself”. But the study questioned the common perception that the Harvard experience tends to weaken the faith of students. Assuredly, the secular academic fear of advocacy had led most teachers to omit religious topics, but this was offset by a “wave of religious interest” that began with World War II⁶⁶.

Nathan Marsh Pusey, appointed President of Harvard in 1953, was a powerful influence in giving religion a more prominent place in the life of the university and in promoting a greater integration of faith and the humane disciplines. Like his predecessors, Pusey was descended from an old New England family and a Harvard graduate (B.A. '28, Ph.D. in classics '35)—the last president with that distinction. As would become apparent in later decades, Pusey guided Harvard “to one of the highest points in its history”. Under his leadership “departments, faculty, course offerings, and so far as one can tell, the classroom experience reached the crest of an historical wave... It was the first time in many decades that the Harvard undergraduate was virtually guaranteed a comprehensive education”, with access to “argument, exposition, contemplation, and camaraderie” that made “Pusey’s Harvard” unique in the land⁶⁷.

As these factors coalesced during the chaplaincy of Father Porras, Catholic culture flourished more than at any other time in Harvard’s long history; “the chaplain and students in the fifties were less defensive [...] and more intent

⁶⁶ *Harvard Alumni Bulletin*, Apr. 6 (1957), pp. 504-505. A survey of Catholic students in 1963 concluded that Harvard’s “challenge... to their beliefs and moral conduct” was likely to stimulate among those with prior Catholic formation “a strengthening, deepening, and enriching of faith”. Jeffrey WILLS, *op. cit.*, pp. 174-182.

⁶⁷ Brian DOMITROVIC, *op. cit.*, pp. 278-283. An able teacher and effective administrator, Pusey (1907-2001) professed a classical humanism firmly rooted in committed Christianity. As a devout Episcopalian layman, “his faith was at the source of his character”; as an educator, his ideal was to strengthen the link between Christian faith and the liberal arts in an age increasingly dominated by science and technology (Morton and Phyllis KELLER, *op. cit.*, p. 177). Pusey’s collected addresses, 1953-1962, *The Age of the Scholar: Observations on Education in a Troubled Decade*, Cambridge (Ma), Harvard University Press, 1963, spell out that aim (“troubled” because of a constant struggle with agnostic professors). “My deep conviction”, he wrote in the preface, “is that true learning [...] requires fundamental spiritual commitment at its center, or it is nothing”. Without “the joy of belief [...] higher education would have no real power to affect man’s highest aspiration” (p. vi). Cardinal Newman would have found Pusey’s idea of a university resonant with his own.

on establishing the spiritual and material means to nourish and fortify Catholic students”⁶⁸. Harvard’s age-old “white Anglo-Saxon Protestant” character began to fade as the faculty and student body became more cosmopolitan. “Pusey had an ecumenical sympathy with Catholics, substantially reciprocated. And Catholics themselves became more ready to send their sons to Harvard” during his tenure⁶⁹.

Like Harvard’s new president, Father Porras linked student success to the quality of their formation. As everywhere, he observed, students who come to Harvard with poor formation “are influenced by the environment instead of being an influence on it”⁷⁰. The solution was to make solid formation more accessible and attractive through the Club’s chaplaincy and programs. At the initiative of its officers, an office was secured on campus in Phillips Brooks House, and the chaplain kept regular hours. In 1955 the Catholic Club was one of 78 active undergraduate organizations with university recognition. Its membership rose slowly to about 200 in 1958-59 (the second largest student religious group after Hillel, which had 700). To reinforce the development of future leaders, the Club brought to the campus in the mid-‘50s distinguished speakers (most of them converts and laymen)⁷¹.

New Friendships

At a lecture by Catherine de Hueck Doherty in September 1954, Carl Schmitt (just back at Harvard to pursue a doctorate in history)⁷² was introduced

⁶⁸ Jeffrey WILLS, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

⁶⁹ Morton and Phyllis KELLER, *op. cit.*, p. 276. Pusey’s annual reports to the Board of Overseers (Harvard’s governing board) further delineate his plan for the university.

⁷⁰ Conversation with Rev. John McCabe, May 16, 1955, in Jeffrey WILLS, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

⁷¹ These included Rev. John LaFarge SJ (see supra note 61); Rev. Martin D’Arcy SJ (1888-1976, English theologian and apologist from Oxford, wrote scholarly books and lectured widely); the Servant of God Catherine de Hueck Doherty (1896-1985, a pioneer in implementing the social doctrine in North America and author of more than 30 books on social action and spirituality); the Servant of God Dorothy Day (1897-1980, social activist and writer who gave primacy to the spiritual life, and co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement in 1933); Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn (1909-1999, Austrian historian, author, and lecturer who became a leading authority on 19th century European liberalism and its later ideological distortions); Jacques Maritain (1882-1973, French philosopher who promoted the 20th century Thomistic revival); and Christopher Dawson (1889-1970, British historian who came to Harvard Divinity School as occupant of the first chair of Catholic Studies). Typical themes were Father LaFarge’s 1959 and 1960 talks, “Why Be Social Minded?” and “Mature Faith in a Confused Year”. Jeffrey WILLS, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-96.

⁷² Schmitt first heard of Opus Dei in spring 1951, at the end of his senior year at Harvard, when his Adams House roommate met Joseph Barredo as they traveled together between Boston and Chicago. After Schmitt’s graduation, he studied in Europe for two years, and then did a year of

to Bob Bucciarelli by James Murphy. The three of them had grown up in the vicinity of New Canaan, Connecticut. Schmitt and Murphy were also friends of members of the family of Malcolm Kennedy, a freshman from New York City, who would soon join the blossoming friendship.

Such meetings of like-minded students would occur over and over at the lectures and frequently develop into lasting friendships. “During that school year”, Msgr. Bucciarelli recalls, “Carl and I saw one another often because we took some medieval history courses together. Carl joined St. Paul’s choir, of which I was also a member. We traveled together between school and home, sometimes hitchhiking or in a car I would borrow from home. From time to time we went to a movie or some cultural event in Boston and to get an Italian meal in the North End”⁷³.

At the end of 1954, Father Porras received a unique opportunity to form a friendship that would also put his work on a strong supernatural footing when God sent the best “angel” of all. Bishop Wright, now in the neighboring Worcester diocese, was visiting a 17-year-old high school athlete (from Canterbury College in Worcester) confined to an iron lung in a Boston hospital, a victim of poliomyelitis that left him paralyzed from neck to feet⁷⁴. Bishop Wright asked Father Porras if he could bring daily Communion to this student, whose name was Richard.

That very afternoon, when Father Porras arrived at the hospital, Richard identified him as the Opus Dei priest who was giving spiritual direction to two of his teachers. Richard began the conversation: “Earlier I had wanted to ask some questions, but the opportunity hasn’t come until now. If you are up for it, we could talk a while every day”. After agreeing on a regular time for his visits, Father Porras left, as Richard smiled and called out, “Sorry I can’t accompany you to the door”.

Father Porras tried to make the daily visits entertaining and cheerful get-togethers. Often Richard mentioned the Work. One day Father Porras asked if he would like to take part in the Harvard apostolate by offering his forced inactivity for that and other intentions as well: “for the Father, for the Roman College of the Holy Cross, and the expansion of the Work in Boston and everywhere”. This suggestion met with great enthusiasm as a way to make good use of

graduate work at the University of Chicago (1953-54). There he met Barredo at Calvert House (that university’s Catholic Club) and was invited to visit Woodlawn Residence to attend a lecture on Isidoro Zorzano by Daniel Sargent (Feb. 1954). *God’s Engineer*, had just been published (CS).

⁷³ RB.

⁷⁴ Ironically, in the same year, 1954, Dr. Jonas Salk produced a long-awaited vaccine that eventually stamped out the dread disease.

his confinement: “Yes, yes, I’ll pray a lot all the time. I promise!”. The next day, Father Porras brought Richard a relic of Isidoro, which had just arrived from Spain. From now on, he will be “very close to all of us”⁷⁵.

DEVELOPING THE APOSTOLATE—1955

The Harvard Front

The pace of the apostolate quickened after the official inauguration of Trimount House, thanks in part to a recently published brochure. The number of residents increased, and each day brought some new development. One day a lady came to the door with \$15 in coins. Her husband (probably John Loria or Jacques Bonneville) had helped to work on the house during the renovation. When their small children and playmates heard about the lack of money to pay workers, they decided to help out by skipping candy bars and saving the money. Another time a group of Catholic students from various Latin American countries including Mexico, Argentina, Chile, Panama, and Peru asked to make a day of recollection at Trimount, following the typical schedule of meditations and talks. After Benediction they asked many questions about Opus Dei in the course of a long get-together⁷⁶.

Before the new semester began in January 1955, freshman Malcolm Kennedy returned from vacation and went to Kirkland House for Sunday dinner with Carl Schmitt, now back at Harvard after a three-year post-graduate absence. Bob Bucciarelli joined them just as they were finishing, and Bill Stetson arrived shortly thereafter from his job as organist at a local church. Bucciarelli introduced Stetson to Schmitt, and the four of them decided to go downtown to a movie. “It was an Anglo-Italian production of ‘Romeo and Juliet’ at the Beacon Theatre—a beautifully photographed film which I learned later had provided St. Josemaría with ideas for designing and decorating a room in Villa Tevere [the central house in Rome], then under construction”⁷⁷.

After the movie, since it wasn’t dark yet, we went out of curiosity to the nearby Common. Bob suggested we walk over to Marlborough St., which was nearby; he said he knew some people there. He rang the bell at the front door of Trimount House with some insistence, but no one came. Finally, a window on the third floor opened and a heavily accented voice informed us that no one

⁷⁵ AGP, Sec. P01 XII-1954, pp. 13-15.

⁷⁶ AGP, Sec. P03 X-1954, pp. 49-51. For a description of “meditations” preached by priests of Opus Dei, see, John F. COVERDALE, *Uncommon Faith: The Early Years of Opus Dei (1928-1943)*, Princeton (N.J.)–New York, Scepter Publishers, 2002, pp. 139-142.

⁷⁷ RB.

was home. I suspect they were away on retreat. The interesting thing about this incident is that the four of us would be in the Work not long thereafter⁷⁸.

Msgr. Bucciarelli recalls that a month or so later a flu confined him to the student ward of Mt. Auburn Hospital for a couple of days. “The word reached Father Bill, who came to visit me. That kindness impressed me very much. Later that year I brought a number of friends to Trimount for Sunday dinner and get-together”⁷⁹. Although Bucciarelli had been in contact with members of Opus Dei for some time (helping out at Trimount and introducing friends), he had not attended spiritual activities. By contrast, Stetson (another helper) had begun attending Saturday meditations and Benediction and was bringing friends along.

In the opening months of 1955 the apostolate was getting into full swing. The few members of the Work began organizing seminars on different topics of spiritual as well as intellectual interest for the members of the Catholic Club. In addition to their intrinsic value, the seminars offered one more occasion to get to know other students and to build friendships. A number of those initially contacted in this way began joining members of the Work on excursions and going to Trimount for the Saturday meditations and get-togethers, as well as days of recollection one Sunday a month. In many cases, they found themselves attracted by the family atmosphere of the residence and by the simple, unpretentious friendship they observed among the residents. Other members of the Catholic Club, such as George Rossman, a first-year student from New Hampshire, would meet Opus Dei later.

Among the Catholic Club’s spring activities, Father Porras inaugurated a weekend retreat during Lent at Campion Hall, North Andover, Mass. Among the forty students who attended was Michael Curtin, a sophomore in physics from southern California. Shortly afterwards, he recognized this as an extraordinary opportunity to begin speaking with a priest about the direction of his studies and his life. He began attending the family and spiritual activities at Trimount, and a little before the semester ended, he became the first Harvard student to ask for admission as a numerary member of Opus Dei. Father Porras was often heard to remark in later years, “Mike joined the Work and then left for his summer job at home—life-guarding at a swimming pool!”⁸⁰.

⁷⁸ MK.

⁷⁹ RB.

⁸⁰ JG. A photo of the students on that first retreat (Jeffrey WILLS, *op. cit.*, p. 145) shows Curtin third from left on the front row. Lawrence Michael Curtin was born in Steubenville, Ohio Sept. 20, 1935 and spent most of his early years in southern California. After graduating from Harvard in 1957, he would spend four years in Rome, obtain a doctorate in theology at the Lateran

As the spring semester drew to a close, students began reserving rooms at Trimount for the following school year, including some from other universities where they were Newman Club leaders. On his application, one of them wrote: “We need a solid interior life in order to raise the tone of our club”. In June, Manolo Barturen left Boston to “break ground” in the country’s largest city, leaving the residence in the hands of Peter Ejarque, Jim Polo, and Louie Garrido. For the rest of his life, Barturen conducted his business in New York, welcomed newcomers, and helped start the first centers in the metropolitan area⁸¹.

Meanwhile at M.I.T.

Early in the spring of 1955, Dominick Fortunato, a co-op sophomore at M.I.T.⁸², was introduced to the Work at Trimount. He spoke briefly—just long enough for a seed to be planted—with Father Porras before leaving for several months of work experience with the Ford Motor Co. in Detroit. That year Dominick was serving as spiritual activities coordinator of M.I.T.’s Newman Club and had organized its student retreat at Miramar, the Franciscan center in Duxbury on the South Shore. Ed O’Brien, Club President, had become a good friend of Dominick, who later introduced Ed to Trimount⁸³.

University, and be ordained (1961). Mike was asked to accompany St. Josemaría and his first successor to London in the summers of 1959 and 1960; he left memoirs of those special months. After he devoted many years to pastoral work in several cities, primarily among university students at Chicago and Harvard, James Cardinal Hickey of Washington appointed him director of the Catholic Information Center (downtown Washington) in 1992. He suffered a series of heart attacks and died there on Feb. 4, 1999. Cfr. *Romana. Bulletin of the Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei*, 15 (1999), p. 134. Fellow students remember “his infectious smile” and good-natured quips—“a typical Californian: mellow and laid-back. He studied hard but never gave the impression of being overly studious. He loved family life, get-togethers, and especially the singing on feast days”, accompanying himself on the guitar. Recollections of Dominic Fortunato, hereafter DF; of Rev. Paul Donlan, hereafter PD.

⁸¹ Shortly after his arrival in New York, Barturen received a letter from St. Josemaría similar to the ones he was sending at the time to those who were turning the first furrows in several countries: “I know that you are clearing the way in that huge city. I am accompanying you and praying for you, because your fidelity and labor now will bring about a great work with souls there later. At times I really envy you, and you make me recall those early times, also heroic”. Andrés VÁZQUEZ DE PRADA, *The Founder of Opus Dei: The life of Josemaría Escrivá*, vol. III, New York, Scepter, 2005, p. 132.

⁸² The co-op program alternated periods of classes at M.I.T. with practical experience working for participating firms.

⁸³ DF, Ed, whose home was in Lenox, Mass., was also a co-op student. After graduation, he began doctoral studies at Catholic University in Washington, D.C., where he would again meet and join Opus Dei.

Jacques Bonneville, the Canadian graduate student at M.I.T. who had first learned about Opus Dei in 1953 and had been attending evenings of recollection for married men, joined the Work as a supernumerary in January, thereby becoming the first Canadian member of Opus Dei⁸⁴. He was followed by Trimount residents Harold “Nick” Nicholson, a guitarist and folk singer from suburban Wellesley, whose Volkswagen was handy for excursions; Alberto Mazzolini, a medical intern from Milan, and Don Coyne, who entered the Navy shortly thereafter.

Expanding the Apostolate

During the summer, student networking continued in Boston and elsewhere. In New Canaan, Bucciarelli renewed his acquaintance with Schmitt’s younger brother, Chris; they had attended high school together. Most of the Trimount residents who remained during the summer were international students. Some of them decided on their own to beautify the living room with a new set of furniture⁸⁵. There was an air of expectancy about the fall term at Harvard, M.I.T., and other universities, as well as the possible expansion of the Work in the Eastern United States, primarily Washington, D.C. and North Carolina. Bishop Waters of Raleigh had visited Chicago in 1952 to express hope that the Work would establish a student residence in his diocese. Father Múzquiz reciprocated by traveling several times to meet potential members of the Work in North Carolina⁸⁶.

⁸⁴ JBo. Jacques and his family would soon be returning to Canada: “When I completed the doctorate in June, I got a job near Quebec City with the Canadian Defense Research Board and at the same time started teaching at Laval University. Before I moved back to Boston in 1961, Father Joseph visited my wife and me several times, occasionally accompanied by Jim Polo or Carl Schmitt. After the center opened in Montréal (1958), the people there took over” (JBo).

⁸⁵ AGP, Sec. P01 VI-1955, pp. 82-83.

⁸⁶ AGP, Sec. P01 VII-1955, p. 78. Bishop Vincent S. Waters (1904-1974) became the third ordinary of Raleigh in 1945. Although the diocese embraced the whole state of North Carolina, it had only 13,000 Catholics. Missionary zeal inspired him to open a good number of parishes and schools. By 1972, when a second North Carolina diocese was created (Charlotte), there were 70,000 Catholics in the state. Bishop Waters was best known as a pioneer in civil rights. In 1947 he began to accept African-American seminarians; of the first two ordained, one became bishop of Biloxi, Miss. In 1953 Bishop Waters declared that racial segregation would no longer be tolerated in the diocese, and he inaugurated a bold plan to achieve integration. Cfr. J.T. ELLIS, “United States of America”, in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Washington D.C., The Catholic University of America, vol. 2 (1967, repr. 1981), p. 437. Bishop Waters recognized in Opus Dei a providential means to mobilize lay leadership, especially among young people. He first encountered the Work in Spain, and on his return began to look for potential members in his diocese. One of them, Henry Menzies, first learned of Opus Dei through him in 1955 and at his suggestion visited Woodlawn Residence in Chicago the following year—the beginning of a

In the fall semester Father Porras began attending the meetings of Harvard's campus ministers in University Hall to explore common interests. Under the presidency of Dennis Looney, the Catholic Club continued to attract new members and began a newsletter edited by John O'Reilly. One of the new members was a freshman from Boston, Paul Donlan. Another member, George Rossman, now a sophomore, met the Work when he visited Trimount House on Oct. 2, anniversary of Opus Dei's foundation in 1928, at the invitation of his Lowell House roommate, Jim Manahan, an active member of the Catholic Club who would be its president the following year.

The club, still without a meeting place of its own, used facilities in various parts of Harvard Yard. The officers usually met in Father Porras's office in Phillips Brooks House⁸⁷. The chaplain used the office at stated hours for appointments with students who came to consult him about moral and professional questions. Some of them began to see him for regular spiritual direction and Confession, and some he invited to visit Trimount House, which was twenty minutes away by subway.

Father Porras recorded at the time an important event, the celebration of the first Mass on the Harvard campus:

October 7, 1955 was a landmark day for us at Harvard. For the first time, Mass was celebrated on campus [in a large meeting room on the top floor of Phillips Brooks House]. As we began to plan it, there were not a few difficulties to overcome. One was the lack of precedent; all Catholic services had been confined to [St. Paul's] parish. The Archbishop had not thought it opportune to permit Mass to be celebrated in a secular institution long hostile to religion. The university authorities also had to grant permission.

But everything worked out, and on the first Friday of October, which coincided with the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, [I] celebrated Holy Mass at Harvard. A large crucifix was mounted on the wall above a portable altar. Students filled the room and followed the Holy Sacrifice devoutly. It was Our Lord's first visit to a place where for many years disrespectful silence has offended Him. How we begged Jesus that morning never to leave again! We offered Him our lives once more and told Him we wanted many vocations from Harvard. When Mass was over, the room was arranged for breakfast and we began to meet new fellows. Some have already come to the house and are starting to be our friends⁸⁸.

vocational saga to be recounted here in due course. Bishop Waters made several trips to the centers in Boston between 1959 and 1962 when Menzies was practicing architecture there. Bishop Waters, one of Opus Dei's strongest supporters in the United States, was greatly disappointed at its inability to open a student residence in his diocese.

⁸⁷ Recollections of Msgr. George Rossman; hereafter GR.

⁸⁸ AGP, Sec. P01 X-1955, p. 32-33.

By fall, Carl Schmitt (graduate study in history), and Bill Stetson (second-year law) had become actively involved in activities at Trimount. Together with Mike Curtin, they started inviting newcomers to the Saturday meditations, monthly days of recollection, and spiritual direction. Bob Bucciarelli (senior in history), began seeing sophomore Malcolm Kennedy more frequently, but came only occasionally to the residence for social activities. These five were becoming good friends; Father Porras had a way of facilitating such friendships among the Club members, which also helped them to get better acquainted with him⁸⁹.

On Two Fronts

A “two-front” effort got under way that fall to provide students with challenging opportunities for intellectual formation. It also aimed to increase their awareness of notable achievements by Catholic laymen in several fields of endeavor—something many of the faithful were unaware of at the time. One front, a Professional Orientation Course in the residence, was aimed at bright secondary students in Boston schools; the other front was a series of colloquia on the Harvard campus organized by the Catholic Club to supplement its lecture series.

The first front opened at Trimount with a prestigious Harvard professor who surprised the students with his clear ideas and sound judgment, and even more when he remained to pray the Rosary with them. At the Catholic Club, which had often sponsored talks by priests, the surprise was in listening to prominent lay professors. The first speaker was Dr. Heffernan from Tufts University, who spoke on “Doctors and Dogmas”—an exposé of the widespread campaign to promote birth control under way in the United States at that time⁹⁰.

The campus series continued with Dr. Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddhin of the University of Vienna, who commented on the contemporary intellectual and religious atmosphere in Europe. Dr. Taylor, a Princeton University dean, spoke on the responsibilities of American Catholic intellectuals, and Dr. Francis Rodgers, Dean of Harvard’s Graduate Faculty, addressed the same topic in the context of his research in Portuguese history. He had become a friend of Father Porras, who asked him to serve as informal faculty adviser of the Catholic Club⁹¹.

⁸⁹ RB.

⁹⁰ The birth control campaign, a reaction to the “Baby Boom” that followed World War II, began when secularized intellectuals raised a cry of “overpopulation”. Its primary agent was Planned Parenthood of America, founded in 1916 by Margaret Sanger, and now gearing up to do battle with Americans who desired large families.

⁹¹ CS.

A contemporary account concludes: “What excites us the most” about this initiative is the way it is “facilitating friendships that will lead to many more discoveries, both for the students and the professors”⁹². In sum,

the apostolate at Harvard goes forward. We are reaching further as we get to know the fellows better and have more friends. Some who have already graduated are surprised because they had pretty much given up on Harvard and didn’t think much could be done here. A few days ago 250 students attended a Catholic Club rally. Something like that hasn’t happened before, but it’s just the beginning. We are looking for generous souls who want to give themselves completely, and many of them are responding⁹³.

One such person responded shortly before Christmas. Bob Bucciarelli had been in contact with the Work since Bernard Law introduced him to Jim Polo shortly after both arrived at Harvard in 1953 but was not taking part in the days of recollection at Trimount. On Dec. 7, Polo explained to him the vocation of supernumerary members of Opus Dei. “It may have seemed to him that I was waiting to be asked, because I took that step the very next day—December 8”, feast of the Immaculate Conception⁹⁴. After receiving some talks about how to live the vocation to Opus Dei, and concretely the norms of piety that Opus Dei members try to live, Bucciarelli went to his family’s home in New Canaan for Christmas. During the vacation, he visited Carl and Chris Schmitt, who lived nearby.

A reduced number of residents remained to celebrate Trimount’s second Christmas. Father Porras gave the Christmas Eve meditation beside the Crib in the living room and said the three Masses beginning at midnight (as was customary at the time) with a number of guests in attendance. A get-together followed. On Christmas day, gifts were opened during the afternoon get-together; in the free time until the evening get-together, there was a movie, and on television a concert of holiday music.

The day after Christmas, some residents decided to go skiing. The meditation, Mass, and breakfast on St. John’s day, Dec. 27, took place very early so the skiers could head for the slopes. Connie, a Swiss by birth who had lived in South America before coming to Boston, provided an old Chrysler for the trip in addition to “Nick” Nicholson’s Volkswagen Beetle—at the time a novelty in the American market, still dominated by large American cars. Another resident, Dick, was born in Lithuania and had experienced wartime privations and reli-

⁹² AGP, Sec. P01 XII-1955, pp. 64-68.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

⁹⁴ RB.

gious persecution before coming to the United States with his parents in 1948. Like Connie, Dick studied engineering at M.I.T.

The group arrived at Laconia, N.H. about two hours later after much “talking, singing [Christmas carols in several languages], praying the Rosary, and reading from *The Way*”. Before long, they were at the slopes, and the “experts”—Dick and Nick—provided instructions and warnings before taking the rope tow and going off to ski. The beginners—Louie Garrido and Mike Curtin among them—took a few spills, but learned the basics on a gentler slope. After another two hours of song and prayer, the adventure ended back in Boston⁹⁵.

Wynnview in Vermont

The history of Trimount’s second year concludes with the story of Wynnview, a country place that would soon become the first conference/retreat center of Opus Dei in the United States and host future ski trips, as well as summer camps and courses.

The story begins on August 20, 1955 at 11 a.m. when Francis Kervick, a retired architecture professor at the University of Notre Dame, arrived at Woodlawn Residence in Chicago after a 90-mile trip from South Bend to offer Opus Dei his family’s 60-acre (25 hectare) farm near the town of Randolph in central Vermont⁹⁶. Before moving to Boston to study and begin his career, Kervick had spent much of his early life on the farm. The idea of donating it to the Work had recently occurred to him upon reading an article about Opus Dei. “The farm”, he said, “belonged to my grandparents, and I want to give it to someone who will use it to bring a Catholic influence to that part of the country, where a Protestant atmosphere predominates. What little I have read about Opus Dei pleases me a lot—lay people dedicated to God. And so I’ve come to see if you would like to accept it”.

Three months later Father Múzquiz phoned Kervick to discuss the matter. The professor further specified his purpose: “My only condition is that it be used to benefit the Church, even if only some professional men and students come to play golf nearby. That would already be a good influence. In Randolph there

⁹⁵ AGP, Sec. P01 I-1956, pp. 67-70.

⁹⁶ Francis William Wynn Kervick (1883-1962) was one of Opus Dei’s first cooperators in the U.S. His South Bend home would later serve as a meeting place for students in touch with Opus Dei at Notre Dame (1956-60), prior to the opening of Windmoor House. He retired from the architecture faculty in 1950 after a 40-year career of teaching, writing, and designing campus buildings. His principal book was *Architects in America of Catholic Tradition* (Rutland [Vt] C.E. Tuttle Company, 1962). The Notre Dame archives hold his professional papers and correspondence, including the Wynnview negotiations.

isn't a single Catholic professional man". Kervick wanted to show him the farm as soon as possible, even in the winter "when the landscape is so beautiful".

Father Múzquiz took advantage of a trip to several places in the East to visit the farm on Dec. 12 in the company of Ejarque and Garrido, who drove up from Boston. A contemporary account describes the property, as "of substantial size, with a fine view of the Green Mountains. A small stream crosses the back of the property, which has an abundance of trees and meadows. A rise across the road affords a panoramic view of the area. The snow-covered landscape gave us a sense of new life".

The town of Randolph (pop. 4000) has a train stop that brings it within four hours of Boston and three of Montréal. A small college, Vermont Technical, is a few miles away, and a Catholic college—St. Michael's—a bit further⁹⁷. After visiting Wynnview, Father Múzquiz returned to Chicago through Burlington, to visit Bishop Joyce⁹⁸.

The acquisition of Wynnview concluded in Chicago on Jan. 18, 1956, in a LaSalle Street law office where Kervick transferred the farm. According to legal custom, he was paid \$1 and "other valuable considerations" in this case "gratitude for his generosity and wishes that the word of the Lord be heard in Vermont"⁹⁹.

FRUITION AND PROMISE—1956

An Apartment in Cambridge

The distance of Trimount House from the Harvard campus was becoming an obstacle to regular contact with many Harvard students whose busy lives did not permit them to get to the residence regularly by subway. Someone suggested renting a small apartment in the neighborhood of the campus that could provide a base for the students. When Bucciarelli returned from Christmas vacation in early January 1956, he "was asked to help search for an apartment where Har-

⁹⁷ Father Joseph's trip had included stops in Washington, D.C. and Raleigh, N.C. "An immense work lies ahead of us" in that "intellectual center" of North Carolina where people in three major universities "are waiting for us". AGP, Sec. P01, II-1956, pp. 38-42.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* Bishop Robert F. Joyce (1896-1990), sixth ordinary of Burlington, was a native Vermonter and 1917 graduate of the Univ. of Vermont. He was ordained Bishop in 1954 as Auxiliary to Bishop Edward F. Ryan, who died in 1956, shortly after Father Joseph's visit. G.E. DUPONT – J. SULLIVAN, "Burlington, Diocese of (Burlingtonensis)", in *New Catholic University*, Washington D.C., vol. 2 (1967, repr. 1981), p. 901. During the tenure of Bishop Joyce (1956 until his retirement in 1971) he visited Wynnview and received numerous visits from members of Opus Dei.

⁹⁹ AGP, Sec. P01 I-1956, pp. 30-31.

vard students could study. I asked Carl to go with me, and someone from Tri-mount [most likely Garrido], to look for a place”¹⁰⁰. They found an apartment on the second floor of a residential hotel, the Ambassador, at 1737 Cambridge St., very near the Harvard campus. It had a living room, and two bedrooms.

A contemporary account describes the first days in this new location, which would play a major role in the flurry of vocations about to take place during spring semester:

On the first day, its living room and two study rooms were nearly empty—a single table and several chairs. We obtained another table and eight [captain’s] chairs from the University at a reasonable price. In spite of these rudimentary conditions, we wanted to begin using the apartment right away when classes resumed after the holidays. As has always happened, we decided to begin with the little we had; the rest would come later as the apostolate grew. Our expectation was not disappointed. When the apartment still lacked nearly everything, the Lord sent what we most wanted”—people¹⁰¹.

Little by little, students began to assemble in larger numbers for evening study sessions. One of them, George Rossman, describes the routine as it developed during the semester:

People were given a key to come and go. On weekdays we got good crowds studying there. When the reading period came in May, the place was packed every night. We would take a prayer break for fifteen minutes at 9 p.m. During that time, Father Porras would make a brief comment on some points in *The Way*, read at intervals. This was followed by a short Coke break, and then back to the books. Father Porras usually received people in the other room. It was amazingly simple, but so effective¹⁰².

“The apartment was convenient to visit because it had a kind of private entrance—a stairway right off the street. Father Bill used one of the rooms many evenings to talk with our friends; when he wasn’t there, Louie used it. When it was free, we could use it for group study projects”¹⁰³. “The study room was narrow, with room only for the table and four chairs on each side. If someone got up, everybody else had to move to let him out. That was an incentive to keep working until the break”¹⁰⁴.

Besides activities at the apartment, Father Porras continued to celebrate the first Friday Masses in Phillips Brooks, and the Catholic Club continued to

¹⁰⁰ RB.

¹⁰¹ AGP, Sec. P01 IV-1956, pp. 18-20.

¹⁰² GR.

¹⁰³ CS.

¹⁰⁴ JD.

sponsor lectures. In the spring semester, the first speaker was John T. Noonan, a prominent attorney and future law professor and judge. Then came Father Martin D'Arcy SJ, whose series on modern philosophers was exceptionally well attended. Dorothy Day followed with a talk on her Catholic Worker Movement. Bishop Wright lectured and also addressed the club's Communion breakfast¹⁰⁵.

Dr. Schmitt recalls a "memorable (and historic)" spring reception at Phillips Brooks House organized by Father Porras as club chaplain for Archbishop Cushing and President Pusey. It was the first time a Harvard president had met an archbishop of Boston. "At Father Porras's insistence, the Archbishop came in full regalia. The affair was a great hit"¹⁰⁶.

The "Explosion" of the Apostolate

Bob Bucciarelli had been friends with Carl Schmitt since Carl returned to Harvard in the fall of 1954. During the following academic year, Bucciarelli turned to him for help with his senior thesis in history. In late January 1956, Schmitt accompanied Bucciarelli to Trimount for dinner and get-together.

On that first visit I wasn't impressed by the 'non-Harvard' style of the residents... But when Louie took me aside to explain Opus Dei, I was completely taken by what he said; it was exactly what our times needed and completely in line with everything I believed in and hoped for. I learned of plans for the apartment when Louie and Peter drove Bob and me back to Harvard. I was reluctant at first when they asked me to help select it. But this enabled them to explain its purpose more fully. What was going through my mind was 'holy envy' that these guys were actually *doing* such a thing with holy conviction and determination.

A little while later, Bob informed me that Louie was organizing a retreat for Harvard faculty and asked me to attend (I hadn't made one since the winter of 1953-54 at Chicago). As a proctor and adviser in a freshman house, I wasn't really a faculty member, but Louie assured me that was no problem. 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. Louie's talk also impressed me—the need for a plan of life, especially including daily Mass and prayer, as a way for laymen to do everything with a prayerful spirit.

Unlike my previous retreats, when this one ended, I was *eager* to start living what it had been about. In place of the subtle pessimism of previous retreats, here was a new optimism and confidence. I immediately looked for Bob

¹⁰⁵ GR.

¹⁰⁶ CS.

to inform him of my enthusiasm, and the same day he told me Louie wanted to speak to me.

The next day, February 22, I went to see him in the new apartment—the very day the rent started. By then it had a foldout sofa bed; there we sat as Louie put the question [of my vocation as a numerary member of Opus Dei]... I resisted (I was going with a girl at the time)... [but eventually] I said OK. The only writing surface was the small glass table at the base of a lamp. As it was close to the floor, I had to kneel in order to use it. We drove over to Trimount, where I spoke to Peter and stayed overnight. In a day or so I informed my girl and kissed her goodbye when she responded, “Any good Catholic girl knows very well that she has one Rival that she *must* yield to”¹⁰⁷.

Less than a week later, the next person to request admission as a numerary member was Bucciarelli himself. He attended a retreat given by Father Cormac Burke at the Passionist retreat house in Brighton. During the retreat, he spoke with Fr. Burke about becoming a numerary member, and did so on the last day of February¹⁰⁸.

About the same time, Schmitt wrote to his younger brother, Chris, a graduate of Syracuse University (where he had studied geography), now back home in Connecticut following a stint in the Army.

I had been encouraging Chris to begin a graduate program in cartography (his main interest) at the University of Wisconsin, where Randall House, an Opus Dei student residence, had just opened. But as I planned to spend the Easter break at Trimount, I invited him to come and spend the week with me there. He did, and after only a few days—on [March 25], Palm Sunday—decided to join the Work. He wrote our parents that he was going to stay a while and look for a job in Boston¹⁰⁹.

The next person to join Opus Dei was John Debicki, a Harvard freshman. Bucciarelli “met John one morning after Mass at St. Paul’s. He lived in Wiggles-

¹⁰⁷ CS.

¹⁰⁸ RB. Father Burke, the first member of Opus Dei from Ireland, had recently arrived from Europe to serve in the new Washington residence, Baltemore Lodge.

¹⁰⁹ CS. In May Schmitt took a week off to visit his parents in Connecticut “to tell them that Chris and I had joined the Work. A few days earlier, Chris had written them a letter, which arrived the day before I did. My mother showed it to me: ‘Dear Father and Mother, I have joined Opus Dei. I am obedient to the head of it, the Father, in Rome, and he is obedient to the Pope. Newby will explain the rest. Love, Chris’ (I was known as Newby in the family—and by Father Múzquiz—because at one point I was the ‘new baby’ to my seven older siblings). After explaining things as best I could, I drove on to New York City to meet Manolo Barturen. Later I introduced my brother Peter to him because he was working there; he got excited about the Work, too, and sometime thereafter asked for admission” (CS).

worth, in the Yard. Shortly afterwards, he went with me to Trimount House and started coming to the apartment. It was in March or April when I spoke with him about the Work—a cold afternoon or early evening. We walked around the block near the apartment. He was ready from the start to give himself to God”¹¹⁰.

Debicki “had returned early from Christmas break and decided to begin attending daily Mass. There I saw Bob Bucciarelli, Mike Curtin, and a couple of other people I had already met”. At first, Debicki declined Bucciarelli’s invitation to visit the apartment, but “sometimes I would join him and Carl for breakfast at the Union”. Occasionally Bucciarelli invited him to Eliot House to listen to music.

The turning point in Debicki’s story appears to have been the Catholic Club’s regular Lenten retreat at Campion Hall where he shared a room with Rossman.

After that I started to pray on my own at St. Paul’s. I knew that I had some kind of vocation and prayed to St. Joseph to discover it. It was around his feast day (March 19) that I started coming around to the apartment. Bob talked with me about a vocation to Opus Dei on the evening of April 23 as we walked around in a cold drizzle. When we got back to the apartment, I talked with Father Antxon [Antonio] Ugalde¹¹¹. All I knew was that this was what I was supposed to do; I would learn [the details] as I went along. In May, Carl, Bob, and I drove to Washington, where my parents lived. Father Joseph was there, and I introduced them to him. He accompanied us back to Boston, stopping in New Canaan on the way so he could also talk with Bob mother¹¹².

Debicki was the most recent member of Opus Dei for only one day. Like Bucciarelli, Bill Stetson had been introduced to the Work by Bernard Law during the 1952-53 school year, when he was a junior. Little by little he met other people connected in one way or another with Opus Dei and began to form friendships with Bucciarelli and Schmitt. On occasion, he would drop by Trimount for dinner, but took little or no part in spiritual activities at the residence until more recently. By the time the apartment opened, he was immersed in his law studies¹¹³. Then came the breakthrough: Bucciarelli and Schmitt “got together with Bill at an all-night cafeteria in Harvard Square (Hayes Bickford) to

¹¹⁰RB.

¹¹¹Fr. Antonio Ugalde [Father Antxon] had recently come to Trimount from Spain and occasionally substituted for Father Porras at the apartment; he would soon leave for the Midwest, where the first center in St. Louis (Wespine House) was in need of a priest.

¹¹²JD.

¹¹³In the U.S., students obtain a bachelor’s degree in some other subject before beginning the professional study of law (3 additional years).

discuss the Work and his vocation”¹¹⁴. On April 24 “I asked to be admitted, and in May moved to Trimount House”¹¹⁵.

Two Harvard sophomores joined Opus Dei early in May. George Rossman had visited Trimount for the first time the previous October, invited by his roommate, Jim Manahan. He had made the Catholic Club’s February retreat with Debicki, and had been invited to the apartment by Mike Curtin. Ever since he arrived at the College from his home in nearby Concord, New Hampshire, Rossman had taken part in Catholic Club activities, but like Debicki it was the February retreat, followed by conversations with Father Porras and Curtin, that made him get serious about the direction of his life and his studies¹¹⁶.

A few days later, Malcolm Kennedy asked for admission to the Work. He has recorded in detail the story of his vocation:

I first heard of Opus Dei during my freshman year when Gil (“Jolly”) McManus, a fellow alumnus of Portsmouth Priory, entertained us at a dinner hosted by Dom Aelred Wall, O.S.B., Portsmouth’s headmaster, when he visited us in Cambridge. Gil told amusing stories about some Catholic laymen his mother had met who spoke little or no English. It was not until a year later that Carl clarified matters for me about the Work; I had known him my whole life because of the friendship between our families. At first I declined his invitations to visit the apartment because I was busy with a production of “The Merchant of Venice”. When that was no longer an excuse, I did go. It was a Wednesday evening, and Father Porras’s meditation was on St. Joseph. When we talked afterwards, I told him I didn’t think I had any faith. He made me understand that what I meant was that I wanted more faith.

After that conversation, I began to frequent the apartment because it was one of the few places where I could study well, and I had a great deal of catching up to do because of the play. I got into long conversations with Carl about history, the significance of Opus Dei, and the adventure of seeking sanctity in the middle of the world. To me it seemed a radical, exciting way beyond what is now called “the cutting edge”.

Early in May I agreed to make a pilgrimage with Carl¹¹⁷. When we went to Trimount to get a car, it was my first time inside the residence. What a rev-

¹¹⁴RB.

¹¹⁵WS.

¹¹⁶GR.

¹¹⁷“Pilgrimages” made by members of Opus Dei are simple affairs. A couple of friends visit a shrine or church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, saying five mysteries of the Rosary on their way there, five mysteries at the shrine, and another five mysteries on the way back. For an explanation of the origin of this custom, see John Coverdale, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-178. In May 1956, older and newer members of the Work made many pilgrimages to thank and petition Our Lady. Bucciarelli made his first pilgrimage with Father Múzquiz and Father Porras: “We went to Mission Church in Roxbury where there was a much-venerated image of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. They must have been praying a lot for my perseverance since I was leaving shortly

elation! What struck me was how happy everybody was, even if they were engaged in a rather silly game that seemed inappropriate entertainment for Harvard intellectuals. But here they were—physicists, doctors, historians—having an uproarious time. How much they enjoyed one another’s company!

The pilgrimage was to a Marian shrine outside Boston; though the shrine brought together the worst excesses of 1950s tackiness, the prayers brought me to ask to join the Work a few days later after a long conversation with Carl and then Louie at the apartment. It got very late, so I suggested coming back at 8 the next morning to give him my answer. During that whole semester I may never once have been out of bed that early, but there I was at the apartment at 8 o’clock sharp to say “yes”. We went straight over to Trimount. Father Múzquiz happened to be there. He told me he had been praying for me, and that now I should look forward to studying philosophy in Chicago the following month¹¹⁸.

The new members of the Work needed to learn more about the details of their vocation and to acquire a deeper life of piety. As a small step in that direction, a weekly meditation for them began in May.

“We began going to Trimount on Wednesday mornings for a preached meditation and Mass. It was very early, long before the usual rising hour for students even at that time. We used Bill’s car. At first there were Mike, Carl, Bill, and I [Bob]. But when Chris, John, and George started to attend, a portable altar was set up in the apartment so the meditation and Mass could take place there. Sometimes one of us would stay overnight on the sofa, when we had to study late—as when I was working on my senior thesis with Carl’s help”¹¹⁹.

Meanwhile at M.I.T., Dominick (Dom) Fortunato had returned to Boston in February from his internship in Detroit. Having a difficult time readjusting to the routine of classes, he went to see the Newman Club chaplain, Father Edward Nugent CSP, in early April. When the chaplain learned of his previous contact with Trimount, he suggested that Fortunato resume his visits with Father Porras, who was out when he came by. Father Antxon welcomed him and suggested he get in touch with Garrido, who phoned him a few days later. They chatted about his concerns, and Fortunato was delighted to learn that he could “continue in engineering and serve God at the same time”. This led him to ask for admission as a member of Opus Dei then and there.

That same day in mid April, Fortunato met Father Múzquiz, who was visiting from Chicago. He began walking the six blocks from his fraternity house

for New Canaan to get ready for my first flight—to Chicago—to find work while attending the philosophy semester at Woodlawn Residence” (RB).

¹¹⁸ MK.

¹¹⁹ RB.

to Trimount for daily Mass and began attending the days of recollection and Saturday meditations. Sometimes he would take the subway to the apartment in the Ambassador Hotel¹²⁰. When summer began, he returned to his hometown in New Jersey to work in his father's construction business. Father Burke, on a trip to Washington, stopped to visit him. Fortunato returned to M.I.T. in July to take two courses, moved to Trimount, and attended the second summer course of formation at Wynnview in late August.

Summer Courses

The fullest opportunity for the new members of Opus Dei to develop their understanding and practice of the vocation came in the summer when they joined older members at several family-style courses lasting between three weeks and two months, depending on their availability. Emphasis was on piety, family life¹²¹, and study¹²².

The largest of three courses was a “philosophy semester” at Woodlawn residence in Chicago. Bucciarelli (a June Harvard graduate), Carl and Chris Schmitt, Stetson, Rossman, and Kennedy joined newer members from other cities for an intensive schedule of philosophy and formation while working at summer jobs to support themselves. Bucciarelli worked on a Coca Cola delivery truck. Rossman found a job at the Illinois Institute of Technology metallurgy lab¹²³. Debicki arrived late for the course and had a hard time finding a job, but eventually landed one loading trucks for a paint wholesaler. He recalls the typical daily routine: “We would have a meditation, Mass, and quick breakfast before going off to work. Most of us said the Rosary and did our spiritual reading on the el [rapid transit]. After work, dinner was followed by a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, an informal get-together, a talk on some aspect of the spirit of Opus Dei, and two classes, with half an hour free time”¹²⁴.

Father Kennedy, a New York native, provides a fuller account:

A summer of philosophy—in Chicago, of all places—was a rude shock. Bob met me on arrival and gave me a quick orientation to family life in the Work, about which I was, as he realized, without a clue. That evening, Father

¹²⁰DF.

¹²¹The familial tone of life in a center of the Prelature is an important element of the spirit of Opus Dei.

¹²²All numerary members, not only those who eventually become priests of the Prelature, undertake formal studies of philosophy and theology at the university level. A large part of the classes are taken in the evening or during summer “semesters” that are compatible with an individual's other commitments—pursuing an academic degree, or developing a professional career.

¹²³GR.

¹²⁴JD.

Jay Meroño gave the first of a series of impenetrable talks on the “*conceptus universalis*”¹²⁵. They were funnier to me than the silly games at Trimount House. Next day I started the job search. First, I was hired as a machinist, of all things—the only white person in a sweatshop on the south side. After two weeks, the man who hired me realized his terrible mistake, and I was given an unconditional release. There was an opening at the north side metal chair factory where Mike Curtin and Jim King were working. The fact that the work clothes they were issued were beyond laundering and had to be discarded every other day was not a good omen. After two days, I was out on the street again. I finally got lucky and found a job on the staff of the Engineering Corps that was designing the Eisenhower Expressway. All I had to do was indicate on large maps the nature of each property in its path. When summer ended, I was given an elegant certificate proclaiming me a valued member of the team designing Chicago’s highway system.

Other memorable things about that summer: weekend trips to St. Louis and Madison where the first residences were being furnished. It all ended too soon, and for me the scene soon shifted to Randolph, Vermont, and then Rome¹²⁶.

The First Wynnview Courses

The other two summer courses took place in August at Wynnview. To get things ready, members of the Work and friends from Boston had made several trips in early summer bringing furniture and working on the house. Father Al (Fr. Gonzalo Díaz, borrowed from Woodlawn, where he had been serving since 1953) stayed in Randolph at the parish rectory (Sts. Rogation and Donation, named for late third century martyrs in Gaul) while installing the oratory in the attic under the rafters. A moderately tall person could stand upright only in the center of the room. Because the roof was steeply pitched, the ceiling sloped down sharply on either side¹²⁷.

Dr. Schmitt recalls one of the trips: “Louie and several residents loaded furnishings into a pick-up truck and trailer and headed for Wynnview. Along the way, just at nightfall, the pick-up broke down and this delayed their arrival. The first order of business was to call service men to hook up the plumbing, telephone, gas and electric utilities, and to locate a local carpenter”¹²⁸. Several more weekend excursions followed (in the old Chevie and Stetson’s Buick) to make the house habitable. As before, the ladies auxiliary and priest friends pro-

¹²⁵Father Meroño had arrived in the U.S. on Feb. 1, 1956 from Italy, where he had just completed his doctorate in philosophy. A native of Andalucia, he had an understandable difficulty teaching in English. AGP, Sec. P01 III-1956, pp. 44-45.

¹²⁶MK.

¹²⁷DF.

¹²⁸CS.

vided everything needed for the oratory—“very simple, but adequate”¹²⁹. “The water supply was minimal. It reached us by gravity through an underground pipe from a spring in the meadow up the hill across the road, trickling continuously into a metal-lined wooden tank at the rear of the attic. From there it fed the plumbing throughout the house. There were no showers. People bathed in the stream behind the house”¹³⁰.

Accounts of these first Wynnview summer courses give an impression of fun and formation in a crowded and rustic setting. The first course ran concurrently with the Woodlawn semester and seems to have been primarily for younger men. Besides the formational activities, they continued to work on the house. Sal Ferigle, Woodlawn’s director, was in charge, and Father Múzquiz was the priest of the course. Dr. Barredo and Father Meroño drove with them from Chicago¹³¹.

The second course, August-September, followed the Woodlawn semester, allowing those returning to the Boston area (Curtin, Carl Schmitt, Debicki, and Kennedy) an opportunity for more concentrated formation without day-time jobs. “We drove cross-country to get there. Father Cormac was present. Four people slept in the living room and the rest of us in two very multiple bedrooms. We had two bathrooms (which couldn’t be used at the same time without exhausting the water supply), did all our cooking, and planted some small pines around the house”¹³².

Also driving from Chicago for this course were “older” members—John Duffy and Bill Gilligan—¹³³. Those who had spent the summer working at home also attended this course. Dom Fortunato recalls that “some fellows came and went at various times during those three weeks, as their schedules required. When Malcolm arrived, he was much too tall for the oratory. Father Joseph spent time with us and gave us meditations. He took me for a walk and asked about my health. We went to a nearby farm to get milk, and made a sort of swimming hole of the stream behind the house”¹³⁴.

Several of the new American members of Opus Dei went to Rome at summer’s end to study at Opus Dei’s international center of formation for men, the Roman College of the Holy Cross, and to learn the spirit of Opus Dei directly from the Founder. Bob Bucciarelli and Chris Schmitt departed in late August to

¹²⁹ AGP, Sec. P03 VI-1956, pp. 17-20.

¹³⁰ CS.

¹³¹ CS, MK.

¹³² JD.

¹³³ MK.

¹³⁴ DF.

join five American students already studying in Rome. Malcolm Kennedy interrupted his Harvard studies to join them a month later. Other Americans who went to the Roman College that fall included Bob Rice from Chicago.

How was all of this explained to the families? Father Múzquiz had done Bucciarelli

the great favor of talking with my mother some weeks before, explaining the Work and the Roman College to her. This, along with the fact that Chris Schmitt would be going with me, reassured her (our parents were acquainted). My father was not as convinced, but he had already driven out to Chicago during the summer course to see how I was getting on. Both our parents accompanied Chris and me to the dock on New York's East Side for the transatlantic crossing, and would come over four years later to attend my ordination to the priesthood and Chris' Mass of Thanksgiving¹³⁵.

Kennedy informed his parents about joining the Work and going to Rome on the way from Woodlawn to Wynnview in late August. Because they expressed reservations, Carl Schmitt went with him to visit them at their summer home in Altamont (near Albany), N.Y. Carl was already acquainted with the Kennedys since the families had long known each other when the Kennedys lived near the Schmitts in Connecticut. In June, Carl had gone with Malcolm to the ordination and first Mass of his brother in New York¹³⁶. Eventually "my parents had no objection if it was what I wanted; although understandably they were puzzled about my leaving Harvard so precipitously, without graduating first"¹³⁷.

Second Wind

The departure of three members of the Work was only a temporary setback to the apostolate at Harvard, and the new academic year began with ambitious plans there and at M.I.T. Returning Harvard students looked forward to resuming the apostolate in a second Ambassador Hotel apartment, a little more accommodating than the first (which was vacated in June). "In September we rented a furnished apartment on the fifth floor and followed the same routine as before"¹³⁸. George Rossman, a junior and resident of Lowell House, looked after the apartment. President Jim Murphy and Father Porras planned the Catholic Club program; the chaplain saw students every Tuesday and Thursday in his office.

¹³⁵ RB.

¹³⁶ CS.

¹³⁷ MK.

¹³⁸ CS.

More M.I.T. students came to live at Trimount, which was under “new management”. Peter Ejarque moved to Chicago in August, and after some months would return to Spain. Having completed his post-doc, Jim Polo took a position at Princeton University. In their place, Carl Schmitt and Bill Stetson assumed major responsibility for the residence, with the partial assistance of Louie Garrido, now nearing completion of his doctorate and planning to take a position in Barcelona. “The only real continuity was Father Bill, who practically single-handedly had to educate Carl and Bill in their tasks”¹³⁹.

“Father Bill was a solid rock behind both of us at every turn. That September I began tutoring on the committee overseeing the honors program in history and literature. Besides group tutorials with sophomores and individual tutorials with juniors, we directed senior theses. What a great encouragement Bill was [busy himself with the final year of law school] in moments when I felt overwhelmed as director of a residence of 35 people and being young in the Work”¹⁴⁰. Mike Curtin, a senior in physics, could also be relied on for assistance, as well as Trimount’s first director, Manolo Barturen, who visited regularly from New York.

For the first time Trimount reached its capacity. Among the newcomers were John Debicki, entering his sophomore year, Dom Fortunato, and his brother, Enrico (Rico), a freshman at M.I.T. Stetson organized a choir for residents and friends from several universities. Sal Ferigle spent a few days at Trimount in early September on his way to Rome to prepare for ordination after directing Woodlawn since it opened in 1949, completing his doctorate, and teaching physics at Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago.

New denizens of the apartment in Cambridge included David Sperling, a graduate student in Arabic Studies. He had entered the Church the previous Easter at St. Paul’s. At that “historic” spring reception, Father Porras had introduced Sperling to Carl Schmitt. “We became friends and began having lunch together fairly regularly”¹⁴¹. Another newcomer was an unusually “fresh” Harvard freshman from North Dakota, Dennis Helming:

My first knowledge of the Work came in late October when I went to see the Catholic chaplain with some troubles. Father Bill was an impressive man, owing to his age [34 in 1956], stolid appearance, discretion and authority. He heard me out without saying much. When he asked if I had met the Work, my negative response drew from him a few broad brushstrokes and an encouragement to meet some congenial students at an apartment nearby. That night I visited it, but without any books.

¹³⁹ RB.

¹⁴⁰ CS.

¹⁴¹ CS.

Bill Stetson took me aside prior to the prayer break, and for an hour told me about Opus Dei and the vocation, ending with encouragement to consider it for myself. I begged off, saying that it seemed like a fine idea, but I didn't know if it was for me or not; there was a lurking possibility of the priesthood. I stayed for the meditation and break, and returned to my room with the thought of further rubbing elbows with those like-souled young men. I started to frequent the apartment; the study atmosphere was winning and very helpful, as were the quickie meditations. Most impressive was the fellowship and the interest put forth by older students in a small-town greenhorn [someone lacking experience]¹⁴².

An equally “fresh” graduate student named Bob Yoest entered M.I.T. that fall, having completed his undergraduate studies in chemistry at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, his hometown. Although he had attended a Catholic university, it was not until he arrived in the M.I.T. atmosphere that he began to recognize the importance of daily Mass at the Newman Center on campus “if I was to uphold and practice my faith”¹⁴³. The president of the Newman Club was Ed O'Brien; others Yoest met there were Dom Fortunato and several other residents of Trimount. He turned down every invitation to attend a day of recollection. O'Brien, too, continued to show no interest in activities at the residence.

Fortunato, now a senior, embarked upon his studies with renewed vigor and turned a dismal junior year into dean's list quality in one semester. About mid-term he assumed secretarial duties at Trimount, “which consisted mainly of fixing things and typing 4 x 6 notes”. Noticing his brother's increased involvement in the residence, Rico began “asking questions”, and on October 11 he asked to be admitted to the Work¹⁴⁴. “As soon as I decided to stay at Trimount, I started attending daily Mass and Saturday meditations, but knew nothing about Opus Dei. After a couple of weeks Bill Stetson had a long conversation with me, explaining the Work and inviting me to join. I resolved the ‘vocational crisis’ in three days after a couple of conversations with Father Bill”. The next day (the Columbus Day holiday) he joined the others in an excursion to Mount Monadnock in the southwest corner of New Hampshire¹⁴⁵.

¹⁴²Recollections of Dennis Helming; hereafter DH. Along with John Coverdale, Helming became one of the early publicists of Opus Dei in the U.S. His story of meeting and learning to live the spirit of the Work appeared in a 1972 Scepter Booklet, “Christianity for Everyman”.

¹⁴³Recollections of Rev. Robert Yoest; hereafter RY. He recalls first hearing of Opus Dei in the fifth grade at St. Athanasius School (1945) in a story about the escape of Álvaro del Portillo and his companion from the communist zone of Spain in October 1938 during the Spanish Civil War (*St. Anthony Junior Messenger*).

¹⁴⁴DF.

¹⁴⁵Recollections of Rico Fortunato; hereafter RF. This 3,000-foot national landmark is a favorite hiking place for Bostonians.

In late November the Trimount apostolate received pastoral reinforcement with the arrival of recently ordained Ignasi Segarra (Mossèn Ignasi), who immediately assumed his “American” name of Nick. Besides his duties in the residence and at M.I.T., he assisted at the apartment. During his first Mass, on arrival in New York, “I reminded the Virgin that we are ready for everything, with her constant help, knowing that she will always open to us new fields among the activities of these people”. At Trimount, Father Nick’s first adventure was an excursion with Bill Stetson and two residents to Wynnview. On the way back, they visited Stetson’s parents and grandmother in Greenfield, Mass¹⁴⁶.

By Christmas, another new priest had arrived at Trimount from Spain, Fr. Fernando Acaso (who became Father Mark). Taking stock of the increasing pace of life in Boston and Cambridge as the year drew to a close, Stetson simply remarked, “It was an exciting time”. The following August, he himself would be moving to Rome with Paul Donlan and Dennis Helming¹⁴⁷.

The departure for Rome of these first new members of the Work left more work for the others, but already in the next academic year, the apostolate continued to grow and produce fruit. By 1959 the Cambridge apartment gave way to a new student residence in Cambridge—Elmbrook Residence. But the story of these developments must await a future article.

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¹⁴⁶ AGP, Sec. P01 I-1957, pp. 61-63.

¹⁴⁷ WS. Father Nick would move on to Chicago in a few months, and Father Mark to Japan.



Trimount House, the first university residence of Opus Dei in Boston, located on Marlborough Street.

On October 19, 1954, the archbishop of Boston, Richard James Cushing, blessed the house and celebrated Holy Mass for the official inauguration of the residence.



A panoramic view of Harvard University in the 1950s, where many of Trimount House's residents studied.