

Directors and Associates
of
Our Lady of the Oaks Retreat House
Grand Coteau, Louisiana

Compiled by Fr. Jerome Henry Neyrey, SJ

on the occasion of
the 75th Anniversary Celebration of
the Dedication

Sunday, October 6, 2013

Directors and Associates of Our Lady of the Oaks – Alphabetical Order

Fr. Gerald Armstrong, SJ	1949-1952
Fr. James Babb, SJ	1970-1971, 1985-1991
Fr. Ronald Joseph Barrilleaux, SJ	1962-63
Fr. Kenneth Buddendorf, SJ	1998-2007
Fr. Francis James Coco, SJ	1972-76, 1983-88, 1993-2006
Fr. John Thomas Condry, SJ	1980-84, 1993-2006
Mr. Jimmy L. Dauzat, Esq	2007-
Fr. Edward Donahue, SJ	1960-1966
Fr. Thomas Gillin, SJ	1967-1970
Fr. Harry Pillans Heiter, SJ	1985-88
Fr. Duval Hilbert, SJ	1958-61
Fr. Rodney T. Kissinger, SJ	1970-71
Fr. Jerome Henry Neyrey, SJ	2007 –
Fr. Daniel Partridge, SJ	1971-74
Fr. Paul Berchmans Patin, SJ	2005 –
Fr. Louis Poché	1982-1985
Fr. Sam Hill Ray, SJ	1939-44
Fr. George Raywood, SJ	1974-77
Edward J. Romagosa, SJ	1988-91
Fr. Austin Wagner, SJ	1944-49

Directors and Associates of Our Lady of the Oaks – Chronological Order

Fr. Sam Hill Ray, SJ	1939-44
Fr. Austin Wagner, SJ	1944-49
Fr. Gerald Armstrong, SJ	1949-52
Fr. Duval Hilbert, SJ	1958-61
Fr. Edward Donahue, SJ	1960-66
Fr. Ronald Joseph Barrilleaux, SJ	1962-63
Fr. Thomas Gillin, SJ	1967-70
Fr. Rodney T. Kissinger, SJ	1970-71
Fr. James Babb, SJ	1970-71, 1985-91
Fr. Daniel Partridge, SJ	1971-74
Fr. Francis James Coco, SJ	1972-76, 1983-88, 1993-2006
Fr. George Raywood, SJ	1974-77
Fr. John Thomas Condry, SJ	1980-84, 1993-2006
Fr. Louis Poché	1982-85
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Gerald Anthony Armstrong, SJ

1949 - 1952

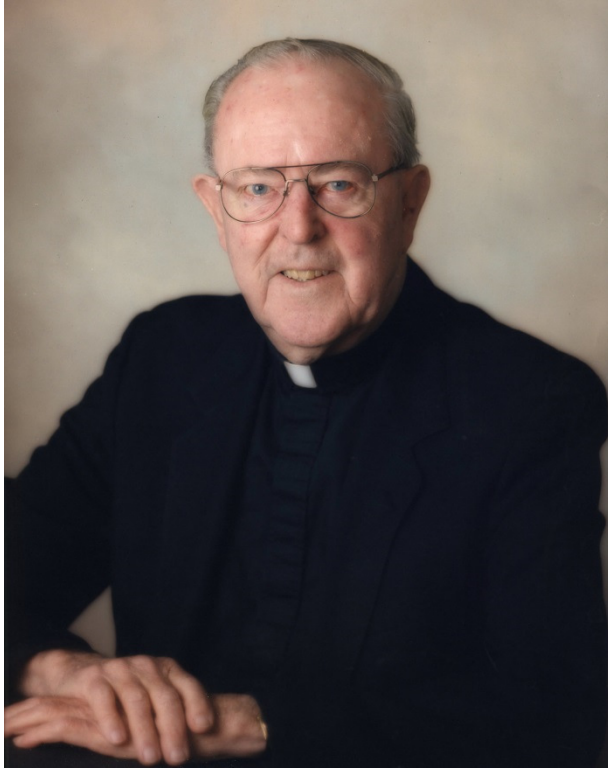
The Armstrong twins, Gerald and Bernard, were born in 1909. Skipping ahead, we find them in their early 20s, men who fancied nothing more than playing bridge and partying. Their parents arranged for them to make a retreat, during which Gerald Anthony claims that he received a grace gradually growing into a more specific call to the priesthood. He entered the Novitiate on Sept 7, 1933 and remained in Grand Coteau four years (1934-37). He studied philosophy at Spring Hill College (1938-40), spent only one year of Regency at Jesuit High School of Tampa (1941), then studied theology at St. Mary's KS (1942-1945), finally being ordained on June 21, 1944.

Jerry served in 27 different Jesuit enterprises over the space of the 52 years of his priesthood. His first assignment was to Our Lady of the Oaks Retreat House in Grand Coteau, first as assistant and then as director (1947-52). The building suffered a fire, and since Jerry was in charge, it fell to him to do some major rebuilding. Then his whirlwind career began in earnest: in 1953, Jerry was Minister of Xavier Hall Retreat House, Pass Christian MS; he taught religion and speech at Jesuit High New Orleans (1955-57). Then as he moved from education to parochial ministry, he spent a year at St. Joseph's Church in Macon GA (1958), followed by year at the Immaculate Conception Church in El Paso TX (1959). He went east to Sacred Heart of Jesus in Augusta GA (1960-62), followed by a return to El Paso TX, this time to the new Jesuit High School (1963-65). In 1966 he taught at Strake Jesuit High in Houston; he was posted to Immaculate Conception Church in Albuquerque (1967-68), after which he spent a year at Ignatius retreat house in Atlanta GA (1969); he returned to Albuquerque for one year (1970). He became part of Jesuit High in Tampa FL (1971-75). He next went to the Immaculate Conception Church in New Orleans. He moved to Jesuit High School to serve as a spiritual father.

Then he began a stint of assignments in South Carolina: as an assistant priest available to the diocese of Charleston SC (1978); next he served at Our Lady of the Hills, Lexington SC (1979), and finally St. Mary Help of Christians in Aiken SC (1980-81). After a brief interval, Jerry turned east to Charleston to serve for two years at Sacred Heart Church (1984-85), then to St. Mary's Church in Edgefield SC (1986) and finally to St. John the Baptist Church in Charleston (1987). He went to Dallas, but not to the school (1989-94); Jerry became the parochial vicar to All Saints Church (1989-90), and then the Assistant Pastor at St. Rita's Church (1991-94). Gerald Anthony Armstrong was then in his mid-eighties, showing signs that he needed to retire and receive appropriate care; he spent his last two years at Ignatius Residence in New Orleans. During his last four months in hospital, he was overwhelmed by the number of people

who telephoned to recall his relationship with them and thank him. On April 16, 1996 Gerald Anthony Armstrong, SJ died.

Who was this man? A relative commented , "He was a very human person, with human flaws," which made him a great confessor to broken and distraught people. In one obituary we read: "St. Rita Parish greatly admired and loved him. His kindness, good humor, and homiletic skills were marvelous gifts. .his simple down-to-earth style was most attractive. As he shuffled down the aisle his smile and guarded wave to the people became his trademark."



James C. Babb, SJ.

1970-71, 1985-91

James Babb, one of eleven children, was born in Brockton MA on Dec 23, 1914. He entered the novitiate of the New Orleans Province on June 9, 1933. His course of formation was regular: philosophy, regency at Spring Hill after earning an MA in Latin, and theology in 1943 at St. Marys KS and ordination on June 16, 1946.

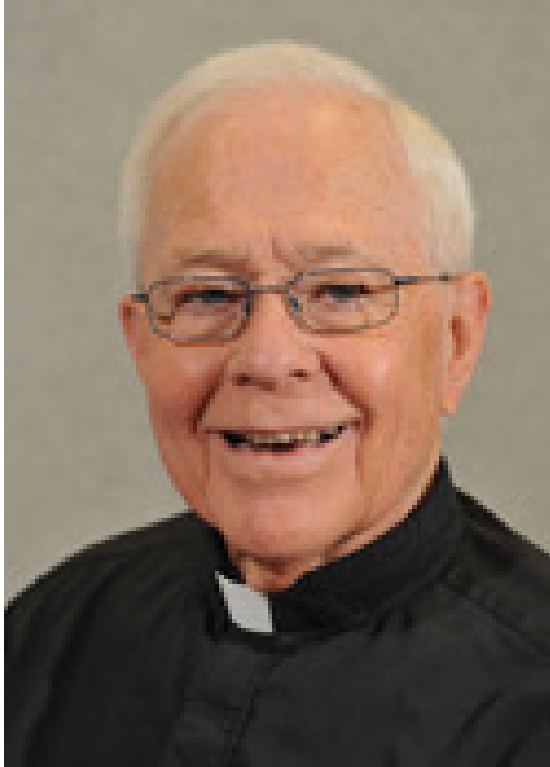
Beginning in 1948 Jim Babb traveled to Ceylon, and served ten years, not so much as a missionary, but as the procurator for the Ceylon Mission. Post Ceylon, he was appointed the rector of St. Charles College in Grand Coteau (1958-61). This groomed him to be the rector of the Jesuit House of Studies in Mobile (1961-67). These were years of great change and turmoil, which placed crushing burdens

on any rector or superior. He had an impossible job.

He turned from being rector to director. For three years he served as assistant director of Our Lady of the Oaks in Grand Coteau (1967-70). But internal administration awaited him: Jim was made rector of Jesuit High New Orleans (1971-73) and then vice provincial for Pastoral Affairs (1973-77). He traveled in 1977 to Montserrat Retreat House, and eventually became its director (1978-85). He returned to Our Lady of the Oaks House as Director (1985-1991). Justice finally bloomed there as the retreat house began a retirement plan for the workers, as well as health insurance. Jim was posted to Ignatius Retreat House in Atlanta where he served both as its superior and director (1991-2002). Worn out with good works and suffering from kidney failure, James C. Babb, SJ retired to Ignatius Residence in New Orleans where he died on June 11, 2002.

What was James C. Babb like? He was, as they say, "a smooth operator." He was not temperamental, but a good listener. He was well liked and well regarded. His primary ministry had always been that of director and superior, that is, internal ministry to communities and staffs. As his provincial said to him on his jubilee: "I want to write my gratitude to you for the excellent service you have given for so many years in leadership positions in the retreat ministry." Jim's response tells us much about the man: "I have experienced great satisfaction in every assignment I have been given and they include a wide range of things: mission procurator for Ceylon, ten years; superior of four places, sixteen years; retreat work, six years." While at the Oaks his provincial wrote to him, "You sometimes want more of a perfect response than reality is likely to give. . . Please do not be too precipitous about changing things and judging the performance of people." Jim himself responded to these admonitions in a positive way. He said: "The feeling grew that our men needed encouragement more than correction. They need

someone who listens rather than someone who talks. . .It gives me great comfort to know that, despite my clumsiness, I have helped some of my brethren."



Kenneth Augustus Buddendorff, SJ

1998 - 2007

Kenneth Augustus Buddendorff was born in New Orleans on Sept 9, 1929. After schooling at St. Matthias elementary school, he attended Jesuit High School, graduating in 1947. Ken studied one year at Loyola before entering the Novitiate on July 1, 1948. After his spiritual formation, he studied in the Juniorate for two years, traveled to Spring Hill College for three years of philosophy, graduating with a B.A. in English, in 1955. He spent his Regency at Jesuit High Dallas, after which he went to St Marys KS for the study of theology (1958-62), being ordained on June 14, 1961.

Ken was assigned immediately to two important ministries, Province Director of the Christian Life Community (CLC) and Vocation Director. He taught at Jesuit Dallas for three years, but never returned to the

educational apostolate. In 1966 Ken was brought to Loyola as Director of Vocations and the CLC, as well as associate chaplain, jobs he held until 1976. He joined the provincial staff as the Socius to the Provincial for Formation (1970-72), even as he continued to be Vocation Director. Back at Loyola, Ken resumed his work as Province Director of the CLC and associate chaplain. In 1983 Ken moved to Spring Hill College, continuing the jobs he had at Loyola (1983-84). Again he returned to New Orleans as Director of Vocations and the CLC (1984-88). At Southern University in Baton Rouge, he served as campus minister, while remaining Director of Vocations and the CLC. He was back at Loyola for two years doing what he had always done (1989-91).

The direction of his ministry changed as Ken began to gain administrative expertise as rector of Jesuit High Dallas (1991-97). And if Ken's life could be said to have a golden age, it began when he was appointed the director of Our Lady of the Oaks in Grand Coteau (1997-2008). He was truly inspired by the Spirit. He and an assistant, Madonna Hagt, began training lay directors for retreat ministry. Three successive "Emmaus Groups" studied pastoral theology for two years, followed by multiple internships. Thus three groups of twelve persons each were trained, and now flourish giving retreats at the Oaks. He arranged for the JVC to come to the Oaks for its annual retreat. Ken invited Sr. Connie Champagne, CSJ to give the retreat to Iota-Egan, the first woman to preach to men. Ken began the custom of inviting the senior citizens of Grand Coteau and Sunset to come to the Oaks for a three day retreat. . .at no cost. He opened the Oaks for both an AA and an Al-Anon group to meet here. His domestic administration included higher wages for all the staff; in time, health care and retirement programs.

Who was this Ken Buddendorff? The catalogue of his labors mentioned above suggests his zeal to make known the gospel in various forms. Singular in this regard are the innovations sparked by Ken's

imagination. He truly read "the signs of the times." Not mentioned above was a strong commitment to social justice, from visiting prisoners at Jackson Barracks to intense involvement in Pax Christi. His favorite reading, he says, was in the area of Social Justice. When Ken was being evaluated for final vows, the province's "report card" on him provides accurate insight. He was rated "excellent" in all the following: industry, initiative, cooperation, emotional balance, sense of responsibility, forcefulness - leadership, managing - organizing skills. This evaluation made in 1961 never changed.



Francis James Coco, S.J.

1972-76, 1983-88, 1993-2006

Francis James Coco was born of Sicilian parents in Helena AK on October 6, 1920, one of nine children born to Rosario and Giovanna Coco. Besides his schooling he learned to play clarinet and saxophone, appearing at 13 with his brother in several local bands. This brother bought Frank his own clarinet from a pawn shop in Memphis. Frank left home (and his clarinet playing) to enter the novitiate in Grand Coteau in 1938. This extraordinary man was educated in the ordinary course of studies for Jesuits Juniorate, studies in Philosophy at Spring Hill College (Mobile AL, 1942-45) and theology at St. Mary's KS (1948-52), where he was ordained on June 14, 1951.

After ordination he began a lengthy career teaching at Jesuit High School in New Orleans (1954-1970). Then, for the remaining 36 years of his life, he worked in retreat

ministry, serving in most of the retreat houses staffed by the Jesuits of the New Orleans Province: Manresa House of Retreats in Convent, La., Montserrat Retreat House in Lake Dallas, Texas and Our Lady of the Oaks in Grand Coteau, La. Frank was on the staff of the Oaks three times: 1972-1976, 1983-1988, and 1993-2006, a period of 22 years. If this was the sum of his ministry, then we should consider him a typical Jesuit, an ordinary priest. But right when the Church was modernizing itself by means of Vatican II, Frank answered a second call, or rather, heard a call muted by notions of traditional religious life. He came back to his music and his clarinet.

He quickly made the acquaintance of the royalty of the New Orleans Jazz scene: Ronnie Kohl, Pete Fountain, The Dukes of Dixieland, Al Hirt, etc. When time allowed, Frank would take his obsolete clarinet and insinuate himself into the company of the greats, who quickly appreciated his talent; he was welcome to play a set or two with the best bands in the French Quarter. Absolutely always he was dressed in "clerics," the ordinary street dress of local priests. He had entered a world of jazz talent – the nation's best – which included quality friendships with quality people. Shortly after the meeting of Frank and Pete Fountain, Pete told him to send his antiquated Albert-system clarinet to the Cabildo, which Pete himself, the monarch of clarinetists, replaced with one worthy of Frank's talent. Pete designated him the chaplain in the "Half-Fast Walking Club," which required Frank to wear the costume of the year ("Pirates, Indians, Minutemen, Clowns" etc). Jazz music was life's breath to Frank, his pleasure, and his gift to those in New Orleans clubs and parishes and retreat houses alike.

His friends describe him as stable, solid and self-possessed. It is important to note that he had many close friends; he was welcomed to homes on a regular basis, especially to watch Monday night football.

He was a very sensate priest, for the good things of this world would always please him. What other kind of guy could Frank be to be the companion and confident of the New Orleans Jazz scene.

From mid-life on, music was a special part of his ministry. Frank was known as "the Jazz Priest," and one could always hear him playing solo clarinet tunes like "A Closer Walk with Thee," "Amazing Grace," "When the Saints Go Marching In" for groups on retreat, at funerals, and weddings. Once, after finishing a song in one of the clubs in the French Quarter, a patron shouted: "Are you going to preach a sermon?" Frank responded, "I just did." He wrote his memoirs and gave them the title "Blessed Be Jazz." His music can be heard on two CD albums: A Closer Walk With Three (with the Ronnie Kole Trio) and Live From St. Louis: An Evening of Jesuit Jazz. His heart began to fail; and he died on Sept. 7, 2006 and was buried in the Jesuit Cemetery in Grand Coteau, LA.



John Thomas Condry, S.J.

1981-1984, 1993-2006

John Thomas Condry began his life on the East Coast. Although born in Eckhart Mines, MD, all schooling was had in Miami, FL. Upon graduation in 1936, John left the East Coast forever and entered the Novitiate on July 30, 1936. His education as a Jesuit followed the hallowed path of philosophy at Spring Hill (1943) and theology at St. Mary's KS (1946-50), and finally ordination on June 14, 1949. After Tertianship (1950-51), he began one of his three important ministries, high school teaching.

Assigned to Jesuit High New Orleans, John taught there for the next twenty years (1951-71). He taught the 8th graders, the pre-freshmen, who skipped the eight grade at their previous schools.

They forwent being top dogs there, to take their the bottom of a large student body. John taught these students who, while intelligent, suffered from acute social distress. His touch with these boys was masterful: he was scoutmaster, uncle, and guardian angel to young men. And he did this for twenty years.

At mid life, Fr. Condry left the security of educating youth to serve in sacrament and word the new Jesuit parish in Dallas (1974-78). Only a four year stint, but it confirmed John in the direction of direct pastoral ministry. His third ministry was shooting up like a sapling, namely, giving the Spiritual Exercises at Jesuit Retreat Houses. His labors brought him to Maryhill Retreat House in Pineville LA (1984-85). As they say, "Friend, come up higher," which John did with an assignment to Manresa House of Retreats, Convent, LA (1987-92). John returned to the site of his Novitiate, to Our Lady of the Oaks Retreat House in Grand Coteau, LA where he had two periods of directing retreats (1980-84, 1993-06).

While many Jesuits performed such labors, one asks what made John Thomas Condry so effective? First, he had a delightful sense of humor, bringing it right into his talks and homilies. At Grand Coteau he became part of the local parish ministry, saying both the dreaded 6:15am Mass and hearing the confessions of the children in St. Ignatius school and the Academy of the Sacred Heart. People always commented on his gentle presence, and especially his reminding parishioners of the core of the Gospel, God's compassion toward and God's hopes for them. People regularly observed that John was "down to earth."

John told us about his ministry in a short piece he wrote on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of being in the Society of Jesus.

The Society of Jesus afforded me all the means necessary to have a full, happy, meaningful life of service in three different ministries. . Providence has probably decreed that I should end back at the beginning (i.e., Grand Coteau LA). But I can truthfully say it's been a wonderful life for which I most gladly render heartfelt thanks to God and to the best of caring brothers - the Society of Jesus.

John Thomas Condry, SJ might have lived to see his nineties, except for the leukemia which relentlessly diminished him. His last days were crowded with friends who came to say good-bye and plant one last kiss on his face. His death was the dream of all of us. He received the Sacrament of the Sick, Viaticum, and began the Prayers for the Dying as the entire staff of the Oaks and John's cousin, Jo-Ann lifted his spirit up to God on July 1, 2006.



Thomas J. Cronin, S.J.

1962-64, 1987-93

Tom's mother and father were born in County Kerry, Ireland, but he was born in Pittsburgh, where he was baptized, raised and educated. After a year at Duquesne University, he entered the Novitiate on Sept 7, 1939. The rest is predictable: Novitiate and Juniorate in Grand Coteau, then philosophy at Spring Hill College where he earned a B.S. in Physics (1943-46); Regency in Dallas (1946-49), theology in St. Marys KS (1949-53) and then ordination on June 17, 1953.

Tom began his ministry teaching

Theology at Spring Hill College (1954-62). Since he taught Theology for eight years, we presume that he was competent and interested. A sea change occurred when in 1962 he began giving retreats in the retreat houses in the South: Our Lady of the Oaks (1962-64), Ignatius House in Atlanta (1964-65), and Montserrat in Dallas (1965-68). He then labored in various parishes which the province staffed: St. Ann in West Palm Beach (1968-70), Gesú in Miami (1970-74), Assumption Parish in Houston (1974-76) and finally Immaculate Conception in New Orleans (1976-77).

But Thomas was an alcoholic, with all the accompanying crises. He was sent to a recovery facility and stopped his drinking. After his stay at Marianella Pastoral Center, he got back on the retreat house circuit, working at Manresa (1977-87), then at Our Lady of the Oaks (1987-93) and then back to Manresa (1993-2005). The last three appointments are notable for their length.

Thomas J. Cronin was a complicated and difficult man, not unlike a "street angel / house devil." Colman McCarthy of NCR fame matriculated at Spring Hill and wrote on learning of Tom Cronin's death, ". . . his first assignment in 1954 was running the counseling office and teaching theology at Spring Hill College. . . My good fortune was to be among the many students Tom Cronin befriended." McCormack later highlights Tom's "kindness and innate gifts for empathy." In another obituary, we learn, "Retreatants loved the collection of stories that Tom used in his retreat talks and also his gentle way of proclaiming the gospel." And yet a quite different story is told about Tom from people who had to work with him; they claim that Tom's signature song was Frank Sinatra's "I did it my way." He was known to act very independently, which probably strained the relationships within the retreat houses and parishes in which he labored. This became evident when in his final illnesses he refused to go to the Jesuit infirmary in New Orleans, but was taken by friends to the Ollie Steele Burden Nursing Facility in Baton Rouge. The

Jesuit career of Thomas J. Cronin, SJ came to its end on February 24, 2005 early in the morning. He was 84 years of age, had been a Jesuit for 65 years, and a priest for 51 years.



Jimmy Lee Dauzat

2010 -

"Jimmy," not James, was born on September 16, 1943 in Maurepas, Louisiana. He grew up on the family farm in Marksville, LA. Every summer until he entered college he labored side-by-side with his father raising cattle, cotton and soybeans. He attended UL in Lafayette but needed to work a number of campus jobs to supplement the funds his family could afford. He graduated with a B.A. in 1965. By all accounts, Jimmy was a solid student: serious about his courses and very goal oriented. He was recognized by some of the most prestigious campus societies: Phi Kappa Phi and Blue Key; he was vice president of the men's student government. His worth was appreciated by Tulane University who offered Jimmy a full scholarship to its Law School. He rewarded their trust by serving on the Law Review and the Moot Court, and as secretary of his senior class. He graduated in

1967.

His inaugural law practice was spent in a firm in Opelousas LA; but in 1980 he started his own firm. Shortly, he became the President of the St. Landry Parish Bar Association. It is admirable how Jimmy's life included development of a quality law practice and at the same time involvement in civic and parochial affairs. He was the attorney for Our Lady of the Oaks Retreat House. He served on the Diocesan School Board. As a volunteer's volunteer, Jimmy performed many services for local schools. In time, Jimmy, a long-time member of the Lions Club, became its president as well as of the president of the St. Landry Parish Bar Association, the Cherry Street Academy School Board, the Opelousas Catholic Booster Club, the Opelousas Swim and Tennis Club. In his spare time, he served on the boards of Statewide Legal Associations, becoming chairman of the largest section of the State Bar Association.

His pilgrimage to God began with his mother's conversion to Catholicism as a young girl. He became an altar boy while in college at 19 (farm boys could not be altar servers because of unreliable transportation). In 1971 Jimmy attended his first retreat at the Oaks, directed by Frank Coco S.J. From the early 1980s, his retreats were annual events. He did not just receive spiritual nourishment, he also gave it to the confirmation classes he taught for eight years at Queen of Angels, Opelousas. He served as a Eucharistic minister during this period and brought Communion to shut-ins. Jimmy sat on the Oaks' Lay Advisory Board from 1990 till 1996, officiating as president in 1995.

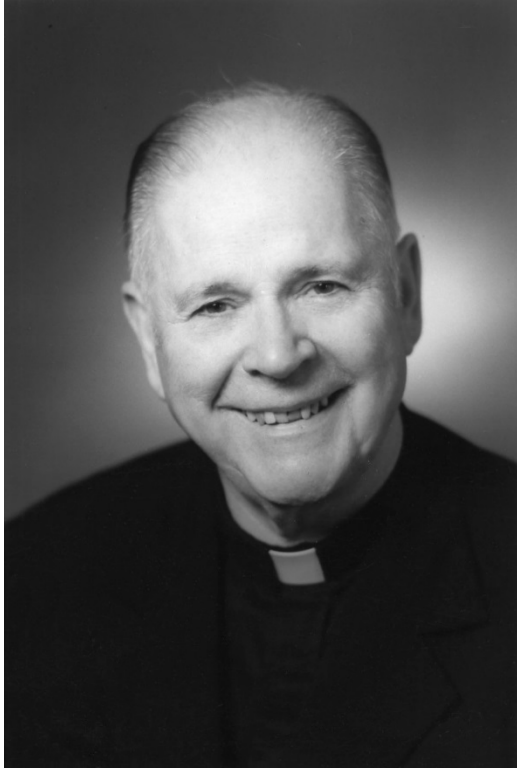
In 2000, he was admitted to the first Emmaus Group (training of lay retreat directors). After the program, Jimmy jumped into the water by directing retreats immediately. In 2010, Jimmy Lee Dauzat was designated the Director of Our Lady of the Oaks. Jesuit houses have diaries in which remarks are

written which remain secret. Hence the admiration of Jimmy reflected in these two snippets tell us much about him.

April 5, 2010 Jimmy Dauzat was inaugurated as the new director. He seems to be doing all things well, enthusing the staff, consulting, taking great care about all the staff.

April 30, 2010 Jimmy Dauzat continues to show imagination and leadership: roof repairs; reading room and library have handsome wood floors.

How shall we describe his character? He is serious and very goal oriented. Jimmy is noteworthy for his many services to groups, civic and religious. Imagination, to be sure! He is an astute reader of people. He is at peace with himself and with others. He finds it difficult to say "no," because his instincts are to help. He loves his family and children, as well as Our Lady of the Oaks. His wife pegged him perfectly: "He loves what he does." He is an avid reader of history and biography. Most characteristic of him is his own mantra: "To those to whom much is given, much will be expected."



Edward Joseph Donahue, S.J.

1960-66

The archives are nearly bare of material concerning the early life of Edward Joseph Donahue. We know that he was born in Mobile AL and attended St. Mary's Parochial School (1918-1923) and McGill Institute (1925-27). Between these to schools, he attended St. Stanislaus in Bay St. Louis MS (1923-25). Three years elapse from his graduation from high school and his entrance into the Society of Jesus; it is likely that he attended college in Mobile. What is certain is that Edward Joseph entered the Novitiate on Sept 2, 1930. He spent only two years at Grand Coteau, namely, his novitiate. His next immediate posting was to St. Louis University, where he earned a A.B. while studying philosophy (1934-37). He traveled to Jesuit High School in Tampa for his Regency (1937-40) and then studied theology for four years at St. Marys KS (1940-44); he was ordained on June 22, 1943.

His ministry in his salad days years was dedicated to giving retreats. Right from formation, he joined the staff of Our Lady of the Oaks; his tenure there lasted first in 1946-47 and later as the director of the apostolate in 1956-1966. Balancing this, he had two stints at Manresa House of Retreats, first in 1947-56 and again in 1966-1971, thus serving in the retreat apostolate for 25 years. After this, he became associate pastor of Holy Name of Jesus Church in New Orleans (1971-1976). He moved to Ignatius Residence, the retirement community and infirmary, staying from 1976-1980. The records indicate that Edward Joseph returned in 1980 to Holy Name Rectory, but just in residence as he became a chaplain at Touro Hospital.

What was Edward Joseph Donahue like? We have an exchange of letters between him and his Provincial, which sums up his character. The Provincial is responding to a letter from "Your Reverence": "I hardly need say that I was disappointed and grieved at the tone and contents of your letter of July 1. By this time I should be used to and expect your complaints, unfair – because unfounded –accusations, misinterpretations of the actions of your Superiors, and your rash jumping to conclusions. It would seem that you are yielding to the driving force of an inferiority complex; certainly there is evidence of lack of the mature, balanced judgment that we can reasonably expect of a man with your Jesuit training and years of priestly experience." Edward Donahue's response reflects a troubled man, overwhelmed, exhausted, depressed, and fearful. "Father, I am pouring out my heart in this attempt to help you understand the situation if not myself. . .I do not think I could survive being stationed at any of our retreat houses after having known the best and most perfect set-up.. .for the first time in my life I'm scared. I feel that with the best intentions I have not measured up or made myself understood or my needs clear."



Thomas Marion Gillin, S.J.

1966-70

If ever a life caught a second wind, it is that of Thomas M. Gillin. The first wind was also significant, for after graduating from Jesuit High School in New Orleans, he entered the Jesuit order on August 14, 1939. His training was standard: Novitiate (1939-1941), Juniorate (1941-1943), philosophy at Spring Hill College and theology at St. Marys College, being ordained on June 19, 1952.

Like many Jesuits, he did a little bit of this and of that, always in different places. He taught high school in Shreveport (1946-49), New Orleans (1954-56) and El Paso (1960-61). He was introduced to a new ministry, giving of retreats. He was assistant director of Manresa House of Retreats in Convent, LA (1956-57), of Our Lady of the Oaks in Grand Coteau, LA (1964-66), becoming the Director from 1966-70). On the one hand, retreatants in Grand

Coteau chant his praises because he installed private air conditioning in the retreatants' rooms. But a nasty incident occurred which prompted him to move the retreat house offices to Lafayette, which proved impracticable and so was reversed. About the time of Vatican II, Tom was making significant innovations in the retreat ministry: he initiated retreats for nuns, women, and married couples in previously all-male retreat houses. Tom clearly could read the signs of the times. Third, he served in two parishes: St. Ignatius, Mobile (1970-71) and the Gesù, Miami (1972, 77-78 and 80). These experiences energized Tom for new labors.

The second wind came to Tom as he stepped aside from the traditional apostolates in which he served and began to build churches and parishes in places that had never seen a Jesuit. He was authorized to go to Mauldin (Simpsonville) SC. He was in residence from 1972-77 and oversaw the building of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton; the Catholic Community Church which Fr. Gillin found when he arrived had metamorphosed into a Catholic Church in the heart of Protestant South Carolina. Several years later he traveled to Columbia, SC and began to build the church of St. John Neumann (1977-84). It was hardly accidental that these two South Carolina parishes were named for recently canonized John Neumann (1977) and Elizabeth Ann Seton (1975); they were genuinely American born and pioneering Catholics. After ten years of labors, Tom was given a sabbatical in Berkeley, CA. After this he was posted to Spring TX to develop the parish of St. Ignatius (1985-89). Fr. Gillin returned to South Carolina to be the pastor of St. Gerard Parish (1992-2003). He began giving the 19th Annotation version of the Spiritual Exercises to his parishioners. He was no doubt influential in crafting with his parish this mission statement:

To be "a People for Others." Together we strive to reveal the Christ we find in one another, we celebrate in the Liturgy, we share in the tradition in the Creed, and in the Living Word of God. Empowered by the

revealed Christ we are sent to build community and witness to the Word with the preferential love for the poor.(St. Gerard Mission Statement, adopted by the Parish Council, 1993).

Thomas Gillin eventually returned to New Orleans, not to retire, but to become a chaplain at Malta Square at Sacred Heart, a retirement community on Canal St.. He survived Hurricane Katrina, but weary of his years, he retired in 2006 to Our Lady of Wisdom, a residential facility for infirm Jesuits. He must have been seriously ill, for he surely would have set out to found a new parish.



Edward Francis Goss, S.J.

1953-59, 1971-79

Edward Francis Goss was born in the Big Apple of solid German parents. We have scant information about him until he entered the Society on July 30, 1927. His academic preparation was standard and solid. While studying philosophy at St. Louis University, Ed earned an M.A. in history at St. Louis University (1934), which equipped him to teach history in the Juniorate (1942-44). He also taught this subject at Jesuit High Tampa (1946-50). Finally he was ordained on June 26, 1940.

In 1953 his apostolic labors took a radical and permanent shift into the ministry of giving the Spiritual Exercises. He was assigned to Our Lady of the Oaks in Grand Coteau (1953-59), and then to the retreat house in Pass Christian MS (1959-61). He served four years at Manresa House of Retreats

(1961-65) and two years at Ignatius House in Atlanta (1965-67). Ed returned to Grand Coteau in 1972 where he remained preaching retreats until he died in 1979.

Many of us know Ed as a large, bubbly brown bear. His innate military bearing was refined by two stints as Chaplain in the Air Force (1944-46; 1950-52). A tall and ample man, he retained many of the mannerisms learned while in service. A brush cut, for example. No tenor, him, but a tremolo of low timber with frequent expressive vocal punctuation marks. No one ever strained to hear him or nodded during his presentations. He preached retreats for twenty-four years; but unlike most other directors, he left us no notes about his materials and his presentations. When asked how Goss's retreat struck them, the retreatants all praised him. One retreatant said of Ed: "Fr. Goss's obvious great love for Jesus. Also the fact that Fr. Goss is like aged wine – he gets better all the time. After twenty-eight retreats I can only say that he is the very best that I have ever heard."

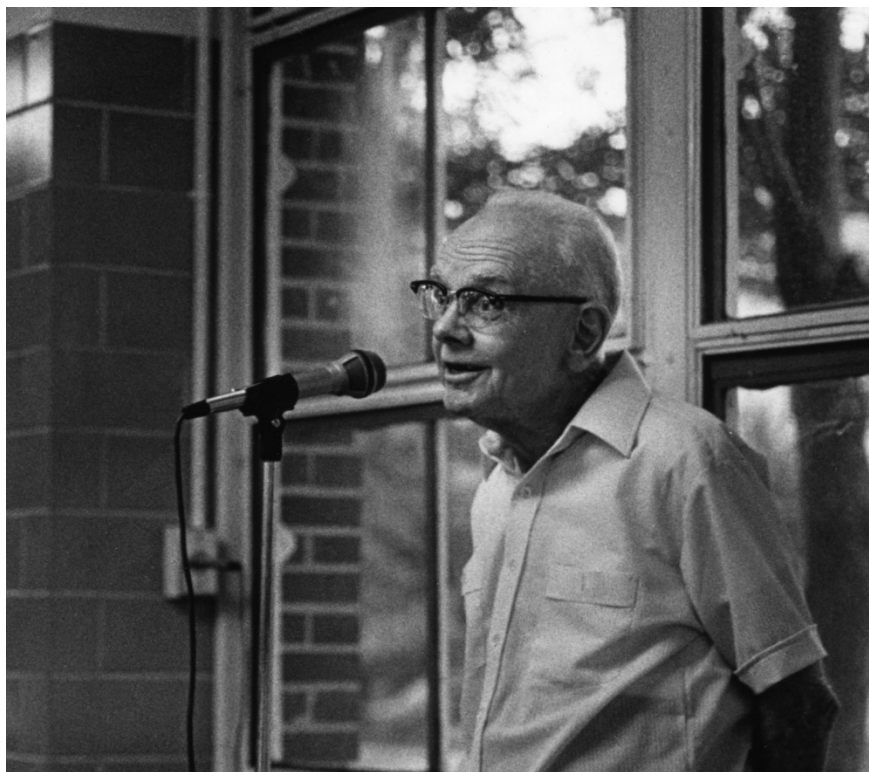
Ed often spoke of a two-sided wish: not to retire in his old age and never having to leave Our Lady of the Oaks. His ministry included adults at the Oaks and young boys in the neighborhood, whom he befriended, took swimming at the nearest pool (effectively desegregating it), and went camping with – something impossible now. But he loved youth. Despite his diabetes, he regularly made cakes when the kitchen was clear after a retreat, and like a honey bear he downed most of what he baked. In the posthumous cleaning of his room, rumor has it that he had dozens and dozens of Hershey Bars squirreled away under his underwear and between his mattress and spring. On the walls of his office he hung three posters: "I've definitely got to get myself organized!" and "Today I need all the help I can get" and "Every good diet allows you to cheat a little" – which explains the cakes and chocolate. It was a

pleasant surprise to learn that Ed Goss teamed up with Pat Donnelly to launch the Province Newsletter. If he cannot bellow to far-away Jesuits, he could write about and to them.

The following evaluation remark was sent by the Oak's director to Father General, Pedro Arrupe in March 1972.

Father Goss is doing great work here. Both men and women retreatants love him and find it easy to cooperate with him. Father Partridge considers Father Goss invaluable. Father Goss impresses me as a truly spiritual man and as having a good grasp on the requirements of the Jesuit vocation, especially in regard to prayer, the practice of poverty and working in companionship with fellow Jesuits.

The death of Edward Francis Goss was most dramatic. On Nov 18, 1979 while in conference with a retreatant, Edward Francis Goss SJ bowed his head, persuading the penitent to think that Ed was napping or seep in thought. But something was wrong, for Ed was silent and not speaking. But as though shocked by a high voltage wire, Ed cast back his head and began his rapid descent into death. All the retreatants gathered in the courtyard and prayed the rosary for his swift passage into the hands of God. His two wishes were granted. So passed a loud speaker and a large spirit.



Harry Pillans Heiter, S.J.

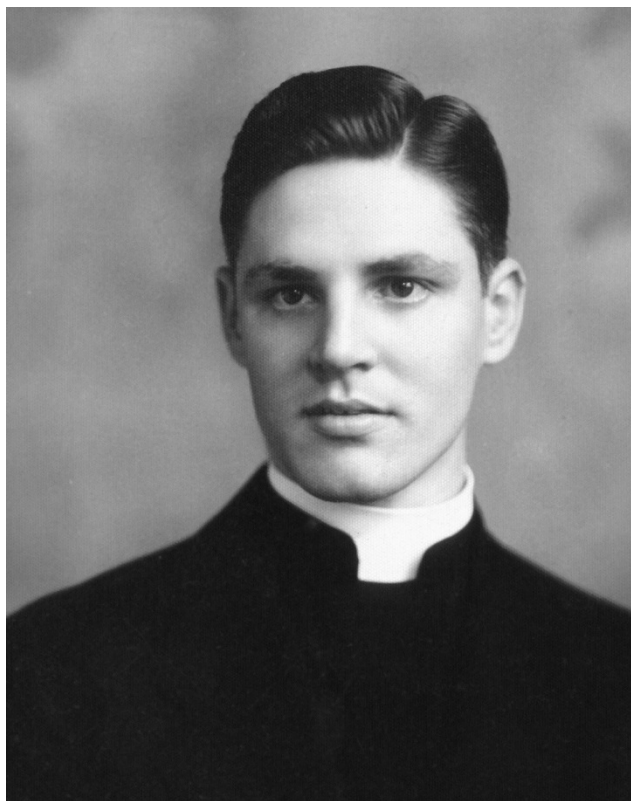
1985-88

Harry Pillans Heiter was born on September 6, 1914 in Mobile. He attended Oakdale Grammar School (1919-26) and Barton Academy (1926-27). He attended Murphy High School in Mobile (1927-31). There follow a period of six year that are unaccounted for. But in 1937 Harry entered the Novitiate in Grand Coteau LA on August 14, 1937, where he spent a total of four years in Novitiate and Juniorate (1937-41). He returned to

Mobile to study philosophy at Spring Hill College (1941-44), where he earned an A.B. in Latin (1943). His regency began at St. John's High School in Shreveport (1944-45), and concluded at Jesuit High School in New Orleans (1945-47). As expected, he traveled to St. Marys KS for his theology (1947-51) and was ordained on June 14, 1950.

His ministry was varied in terms of where he worked, what ministry he performed, and the frequency with which he was reassigned. He taught in many of the high schools of the province as well as its university and college, performing diverse tasks: as Assistant Principal and Prefect of Discipline at Jesuit High in New Orleans (1952-56); Teacher of Latin, English and Mathematics at Strake Jesuit College Prep (1963-64). At Loyola University he taught theology and was Minister of the house (1956-61), and Teacher at Spring Hill College (1964-66 and 1968-75). But the bulk of his ministry was spent at retreat houses: Manresa House of Retreats (1968 and 1982-85), Montserrat Retreat House in Lake Dallas (1976-78), Ignatius House in Atlanta (1978-80), The Cenacle Retreat House in New Orleans (1981-82), and finally, Our Lady of the Oaks in Grand Coteau (1985-88). He did some seminary teaching, first at Grand Coteau, teaching Novices and Juniors (1961-63), St. Joseph College and Novitiate in Jensen Beach FL, teaching theology and philosophy (1966-67); and Corpus Christi Minor Seminary (1980-81). He finished his ministry as Chaplain to the Carmelite Monastery in Mobile (1988-91). St. Ignatius once likened a good Jesuit to a staff in a man's hand: it is constantly in motion and it does what it is told. By that criterion, Harry Heiter was an exemplary Jesuit, ready for any task, any where and at any time.

In 1990, Jesuit High School in New Orleans recognized his labor by designating his labors by designating him as the Recipient of the North American Martyrs Award. Shortly after, on June 21, 1991, Harry Pillans Heiter S.J. died.



Duval Joseph Hilbert, S.J.

1958-61

Duval Joseph Hilbert was born in New Orleans on Oct 8, 1932. He attended St. Rita's primary school and Jesuit High School in 1940. Immediately he entered the Novitiate in Grand Coteau on Aug 14, 1940, spending four years learning to be a Jesuit and two years of college. He did his philosophy studies at Spring Hill College (1944-47), then Regency at St. John's High School in Shreveport (1947-50), then his theology studies in St. Marys KS (1950-54), being ordained on June 17, 1953.

But with two exceptions, his major ministry was dedicated to giving retreats in the Province's various retreat houses. He served at Xavier Hall Retreat House in Pass Christian, MS (1955-58). Afterwards he went to Our Lady of the Oaks Retreat House in Grand Coteau to give retreats,

but also as its superior (1958-1961). He returned to Xavier Hall (1961-1964), now as its superior. He spent one year at the Immaculate Conception Church in New Orleans, and moved from there to Loyola University as Fr. Minister (1964-66). He was posted to Manresa House of Retreats as the director of the apostolate and superior of the Jesuit staff (1966-1979). He returned to New Orleans for three unrelated tasks: Supervisor of the building of Ignatius Residence (1979-1980), a sabbatical year at Loyola University (1980-81), and a brief stint at Immaculate Conception Church (1981-82). Finally he returned to his signature ministry, this time back at Montserrat Retreat House in Dallas (1985-1991) and then Our Lady of the Oaks (1991-95). In all, thirty-three years of his priestly ministry were spent in retreat work.

While at Grand Coteau, he organized dinners for the three Jesuit communities, gathering his brothers for fraternité. Once when fishing in Bayou Courtableau, he witnessed a skiff with two black men capsize; one swam to safety, but the other man sank. Duval dove in to find the drowning man, towed him to shore and gave him mouth-to-mouth resuscitation; after 20 minutes. Agis Journis, 26 years old, began to breathe. Although exhausted Fr. Hilbert continued this task for another 40 minutes, until a rescue squad arrived. It is one thing to save a man's soul, and another to save his life.

Fr. Hilbert will be remembered as the director of Manresa who chose the lesser of two evils. Men traveling to the retreat house stopped at taverns for fortification to face their retreats, which led to many DWIs and accidents. Duval proposed a savvy compromise: if the men would forego their libations on route, he would present an open bar at the retreat house for the half hour before supper. It was a decisive success, and one by a young priest who, for the most part, was dealing with his elders.

Duval Hilbert always suffered from a bad back and legs; he himself said "I have been through 19 major surgeries." But later in life he developed amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, known as Lou Gehrig's disease, a disease marked by a degeneration of the muscles. If the back and leg surgeries left Fr. Hilbert disabled, Lou Gehrig's disease destroyed the rest of his body. In the Spring of 1995 he took up residence in Ignatius Residence, the infirmary of the Province. In 1995 Duval Joseph Hilbert was interviewed by Louis Poché, S.J., which interview provides his own responses to difficult questions. Asked if anything changed in him from the happy boy he once was, Duval said: "I can do nothing for myself now. I can still move my left hand a little, but that's about it. . . Some people can't understand how I can be happy in these circumstances, but I have wonderful people around me. I want to get through this last part of my journey with as much happiness and joy as possible, as much for the sake of the people who love me as for myself." Question: "Can you say where you were the happiest?" "No, I can't rank the retreat houses in terms of where I was happiest. Where ever I happened to be, I never woke up saying 'O God, I have to go to work today.' It was always 'What can I do today'?"



Joseph Paul McGill, SJ

1988-92, 1999-2008

Although born in New York on Dec 11, 1929, his family moved to New Orleans for Joe's health. He was a very popular teenager, renowned especially for his smart dancing. He entered the Society on July 30, 1949, spending two years each in the Novitiate and the Juniorate. After his philosophy studies (1952-54), he traveled to Ceylon as a missionary, spending his Regency teaching at St. Michael's College in Batticaloa and multitasking as needed. When it was time for theology, he traveled to India, to St. Mary's Theological College in Kurseong, India (1958-61), and was ordained March 19, 1960. Joe waited in India for a visa to return to Sri Lanka, which had gained its independence and sent a wave of unwelcome to Europeans and Americans. The visa never came. Like Godot, he waited and waited. Joe was eventually assigned to direct retreats at the Manresa Retreat House in Nyegezi, Tanganyika.

He returned to Jesuit High New Orleans as a teacher of religion and chaplain to alumni (1972-73). He was then served as director of spiritual life at Loyola (1975-79). He subsequently then spent seven years at the Immaculate Conception in New Orleans (1981-87). His chief ministry of giving retreats began with his appointment to Our Lady of the Oak (1988-92). He returned there in 1999 and remained on staff until his death in 2009.

Who was Joseph Paul McGill? His early years suggest a man of courage and patience. Imagine arriving in Ceylon with no facility in a new and difficult language? A decade later, he waited in India for a visa back to Sri Lanka. It made no sense that a Jesuit priest now fluent in Tamil could not return to that country. But the decisions were not his to make. Some people consider Joe as a perfectionist. He once declared that he was "incompatible" with the world as it was. He was an intensely private person, who avoided social gatherings when possible. Few of his colleagues knew of the severity of his diabetes, and even fewer knew of his heart problems. Needless to say, Joe did not readily share personal information. It is hard to say that Joe had personal friends, certainly few in the community. His primary social and intellectual interlocutor was Mrs. Susan Amy who showed Joe exceptional care and respect. As a friend said of Joe: "Fr. McGill was 'not of this world' for many, many years before his death. He showed dignity, manliness, humility, unflinching clarity and understanding (and an occasional white hot flash of the Irish)."

Joe had many quirks. For example, Jesuits typically receive funds for vacation and for annual retreat. With permission, Joe stayed in Grand Coteau for both vacation and retreat, spending the allocated funds on books and journals. This went on for years, so that at his death, there was a library of 4000 books in

his quarters. Joe himself wrote Personal and Biblical Reflections on the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius Loyola, which was never published..

Because of increasing heart disease and diabetes, Joe resigned from preaching retreats. But episodes requiring EMS attention increased, so that it became clear that he needed assisted living, and so transfer to Ignatius Residence. Before any action was taken, Joseph Paul McGill, SJ was found dead in bed on the morning of Dec 2, 2009.



Jerome Henry Neyrey, SJ

2007 -

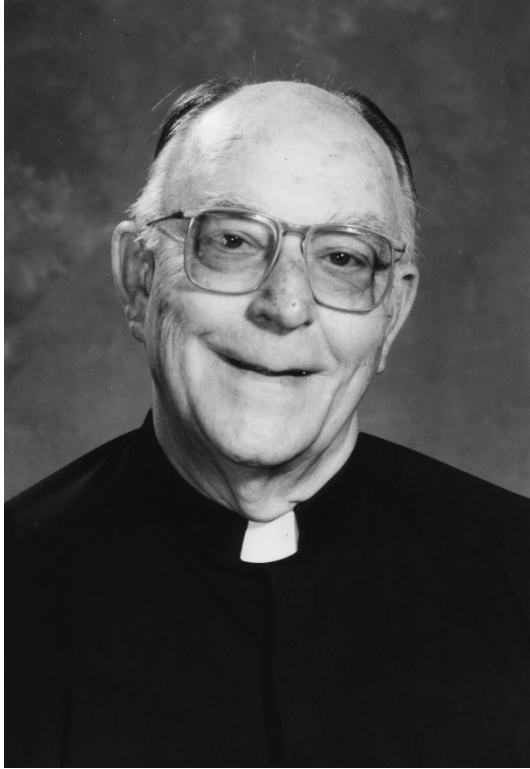
Jerome Henry Neyrey was born in New Orleans on Jan 5, 1940. As a member of Jesuit High's swimming team, he was distinguished for winning 21 silver medals, but nary a gold. He graduated from Jesuit High New Orleans in 1957 and immediately entered the Novitiate on July 30. His formation was un-typical, for he traveled north was sent to St. Louis for philosophy (1961-64) and still further north to Regis College, Toronto for theology (1967-70). He was ordained on the Feast of the Sacred Heart, June 5, 1970, by Bishop Perry, the first African-American prelate since colonial times.

It is often said of Jerry that the Society tried to kill him by degrees: MA in Classics and PhL from St. Louis University; MDiv in Theology and MTS in Scripture from Regis College; two masters degrees from Yale generally

awarded to doctorate candidates who reach a certain plateau; and finally he was awarded in 1977 the elusive and coveted PhD in Scripture from the said Yale. He was 37 when he went to work. His teaching ministry was divided between two professional schools. He taught Scripture at the Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Cambridge MA for fourteen years. He quickly understood the meaning of "publish or perish." Hence he began a prodigious career of scholarly writing. While at Weston, he published seven books and sixteen articles. All of this provided grounds for promotion to tenure and full professorship. In addition he received from the Vatican authorization to teach on a pontifical faculty as a professor ordinarius. Eventually he was give the "Mandatum" to teach theology. The direction of his scholarship was shaped early on by association with the Context Group, a network of scholars dedicated to using cultural anthropology and social sciences for biblical interpretation.

In 1992 he left Cambridge for South Bend; gone were the White and the Green Mountains, replaced by the glacier-scoured plains of the mid-west. The cold and snow were actually worse in Indiana. Now he was on the faculty of the Catholic Disney University in South Bend, which occasionally has a good football team. With so much snow and cold, the weather favored research and writing: twenty-four articles and eight books. Since graduating from Yale, he delivered research papers annually at the Catholic Biblical Association and the Society of Biblical Literature. Jerry enjoyed the expansiveness of the area and the cordiality of the faculty, a change from his time in Cambridge. Many good friendships were made. He engaged in pastoral ministry off the campus: as chaplain to "Teams of Our Lady" (a sodality for couples) and weekend ministry at St. Monica's Church in Mishawaka IN. During his time at Notre Dame a number of illnesses befell him, including by-pass surgery [the family curse] and prostate cancer. He became even more zealous for exercise and proper diet. The Jesuit residence was notorious for hosting Sunday supper, Thanksgiving and Easter feed, and even the department party..

Finally, it was time. He knew in his gut that he should retire from teaching. But what next? Jesuits do not "retire," but take up new labors. Eventually he was sent to Our Lady of the Oaks to preach retreats, which was a smart use of his knowledge of Scripture. When he arrived, there were four Jesuits on staff, but one was transferred and another one died. Thus Paul Patin SJ and Jerry currently provide all of the sacramental ministry and much of the preaching ministry at the Oaks. The important things to know about Jerry are: he is an avid bird watcher, a passionate stamp collector and a glutton for fiction, good and bad.



Daniel Winslow Partridge, S.J.

1970-74

Although Daniel Winslow Partridge was born in New Orleans on Dec 2, 1921, his family had strong connections with Mobile, where he began his schooling. The Partridges returned to New Orleans and so Dan ran through the cursus honorum, grade school at Holy Name of Jesus, high school at Jesuit High School. His records tell that he entered the Order twice, the latter time on July 30, 1940. He remained at Grand Coteau for novitiate and then first college studies. Juniorate. Dan returned to Mobile for his philosophy studies; he was now ready for the work of Regency which he spent first at Jesuit High of Tampa, directing plays, monitoring the glee club and choir (1947-49) and then at St. John's in Shreveport, teaching the same courses (1949-50). He went to West Baden College in Indiana for his theology (1950-54), and was ordained on June 17, 1953. At this time, Dan had a B.A. in

Sociology from Spring Hill and was a candidate for a M.S. in Education from Fordham University.

One Jesuit remarked that Daniel Winslow Partridge's ministry steered away from drama and secondary school education, and he became an "utility man." Jesuits are to be indifferent about where they go and what they do. According to this, Dan was a very good Jesuit. His career bounced back and forth between being an "Econome" (a bookkeeper-treasurer), Director of the Jesuit Seminary Fund, Public Relations and Director of Development and being the Director of Our Lady of the Oaks in Grand Coteau (1970-74) and Superior of the Ignatius Retreat House in Atlanta (1979-82). His service in parish ministry was limited to only one year at St. Ignatius Church in Mobile (1969-70). He spent 6 years at Jesuit High School in New Orleans both teaching and serving as assistant for the President – surely development and publicity tasks. He was briefly the Dean of Students at Loyola (1956-57), and the founder and first superior of Ignatius Residence, the retirement and nursing facility for elderly and ill Jesuits (1976). His long service to Jesuit High School was acknowledged when he was honored in 1992 with the North American Martyrs' Award.

For a considerable time Daniel Winslow Partridge suffered a long gradual weakening due to congestive heart failure. Stricken once more, he was taken to Southern Baptist Hospital where he died at the age of 70 on November 22, 1992.



Paul Berchmans Patin, SJ

2004 -

Paul was born in Beaux Bridge LA on Dec. 20, 1942, into a prominent local family. He received his elementary and secondary schooling at St Bernard School in Breaux Bridge (1948-60). Paul began college as a pre-med major at Loyola New Orleans. He entered the Order on Aug 14, 1961. As part of his Juniorate, he studied chemistry at Spring Hill College. But his heart quickly focused on the language of his own southern Louisiana, French. He matriculated at the University of Texas at Austin to do graduate work in Applied Linguistics (1968-72), returning there in 1975-76 to complete his work for an MA. He studied the obligatory philosophy at Spring Hill College and theology for Jesuit priesthood at St. Louis University, and was ordained on June 2, 1973.

Paul began his priestly ministry with a brief tenure at Strake Jesuit (1974-76), where he was instrumental in starting an office of campus ministry, with retreats for all four years of the school. He turned to parochial ministry with his appointment to St. Charles Church in Grand Coteau as its associate pastor and then as pastor (1976-81). Paul returned to St. John's in Shreveport for a brief stay as associate pastor. Aspects of his pastoral ministry were developed by a CPE program at Hermann Hospital in Houston (1981-82), which skills he immediately used as chaplain of Lafayette General Hospital (1982-83). He returned to parish work with a year's stay at St. John's Shreveport and five years at Holy Name of Jesus in New Orleans (1987-92). He was appointed parochial vicar for St. Ignatius Church in Spring TX (1992-97). He returned to Holy Name for six years as superior and pastor (1997-2003). Eventually he trained to give the Spiritual Exercises as a staff intern at the Jesuit Center for Spiritual Growth in Wernersville PA. Subsequently in 2004 he joined the staffs of the Jesuit Spirituality Center and of Our Lady of the Oaks in both in Grand Coteau.

Paul is a Jesuit with a surprising imagination. He sees what can be done and what can be done with class. It is doubtful that he has ever lived a tomorrow like yesterday, nor will tomorrow be like today. He is also a good friend to his sisters in the area, as well as to many people in Houston and New Orleans. Paul is a Jesuit with one theme, a most essential one, "God loves you." It graces all his homilies and the parts of the liturgy which allow for embroidery. He instinctively knows which of our retreatants speak French, and readily engages them. But his most treasured work is helping people through the use of Ignatian Spirituality and pastoral counseling.



Louis Aristée Poché, SJ

1979-85

Louis Aristée Poché was born on the Welham Plantation in Hester LA on April 17, 1925, the oldest of eight boys. While attending primary school in Romeville LA, he served daily mass at Manresa House of Retreats, just up the road, thus forming his first attachment with Jesuits. His family arranged for him to lodge with his grandmother in New Orleans so that he might attend Jesuit High School, from which he graduated in 1942. He entered the Novitiate on Aug 14 of the same year and began the traditional course of Jesuit studies: Juniorate (1944-46), philosophy at Woodstock College MD (1946-49), Regency at Jesuit High Dallas (1949-52) and theology at St Marys KS (1952-56); he was ordained on June 14, 1955. Because of his fluency in French, "Doc" made his Tertianship at St Martin d'Ablois in the

Champagne Province of France (1957-58).

Before Doc traveled to France, he taught one year of theology at Loyola University (1956-57). Upon return he was assigned to Jesuit High Dallas to teach Latin and English. He returned to Loyola where he taught theology from 1960 to 1973. While there, he took on many other jobs: Chaplain of the Pharmacy School, sub-minister to the Jesuit community, Chaplain of the Music School and University Chaplain. Recognizing the potential of Doc, the province permitted him to study more theology at the University of San Francisco (1964-67), earning another advanced degree. Two characteristic objects grace his life: his motorcycle and his clarinet, which explains his eleven-year tenure as the Chaplain to the Music School.

Like so many Jesuits, his apostolic career made a sharp turn to parish and retreat work. Doc served at the Immaculate Conception Church in downtown New Orleans (1976-78) and was sent to St. Charles Church in Grand Coteau for one year. But he moved 100 yard north to Our Lady of the Oaks where he became the director of institution from 1979-85. He moved 100 yards south where he served as the director of the Spirituality Center (1985-87). But he was not finished with Grand Coteau, for he became pastor of St. Charles Church (1987-91). A totally new ministry awaited Doc when he became the superior of Ignatius Residence in New Orleans (1991-96). He said in conversation that "twenty-five Jesuits died in my arms." After many years of pastoral labor, Doc himself retired to Ignatius Residence in slow decline.

Why is Louis called "Doc"? Most say it was because his father was a doctor. What kind of man was he? What kind of Jesuit? In the Order's evaluations of Doc concerning his aptitude for final vows, we find the following evaluation: Louis A. Poché 1. virtue: excellent; 2. judgment: good assessment; 3. prudence

(i.e., common sense): excellent; 4. pliable, not contentious; mild mannered, not caustic; strong, not weak; steady, not fickle; swift in action, not procrastinating. Doc should be called a cultured gentleman; his hobby was to play the clarinet; he loved to read, especially poetry; his favorite book: Willa Cather's *Death Comes to the Archbishop*. Jesuits liked to be around Doc and enjoy his company. In the paragraph he wrote for his jubilee, Doc said:

Father Bernard prayed as a young Jesuit that God would use him as a kind of stopper or plug –a bouche trou, he wrote in French – a Jesuit ready to be sent by his superiors anywhere to plug holes and do the tough jobs. I just wanted to play for the Jesuits. To be a stopper for Christ! Plugging holes and making tackles. Sixty years later I am still in the game I dreamed of playing in. Beat up and still having a grand time. Praying for the plugs.



Samuel Hill Ray, S.J.

1938-43

Sam Hill Ray belongs in the company of Southern Jesuits with unusual names (S. Youree Watson, Addicks Ransom Marlow; Hacker Fagot). Such a name provides clues to his long and colorful ministry. Born in Titusville, FL, he entered the Jesuit novitiate at age 16 in Macon Georgia. He spent the obligatory years in the Novitiate and Juniorate, after which he began his philosophical studies at Gonzaga University in Spokane, WA (1915-18). He was assigned to Grand Coteau where he spent four years Regency teaching (1918-22). On track, he began his study of theology in Montreal, Canada (1922-24), returning to the States for his fourth year of theology (1925-1926); Sam Hill was ordained on Aug 15, 1925.

His first assignment as a priest was to St. Charles College in Grand Coteau as the Dean of the Juniorate (1927). It was thought that he would bring new textbooks and teaching methods. Alas, the reviews of his teaching were not encouraging. He was determined that his charges root out "defective pronunciation and marked regionalisms," thus enhancing his efforts for all Juniors "to read more and to cultivate a high standard of English in speaking and writing." In these few years he left a legacy of a humane schedule for his students: he begged funds to build a villa house out on the edge of the coteau; the Juniors were give the morning off on villa day to walk, play, etc. In short, he cared that his students were refreshed and relaxed. He imagined a newsletter for the province and had some of his charges write to various houses for news and anecdotes. The Southern Jesuit was his idea. Because he spoke French, he preached in neighboring towns, encouraging men in the area to come to Grand Coteau for a spiritual retreat – the start of the retreat ministry in Grand Coteau. Bishop Jeanmard of Lafayette funded the erection of the retreat house, of which Sam Hill Ray became the Founder and Director (1938-43).

The next years rush by, with Sam Hill established as Dean of Men at Loyola University (1934-38). For the last years of WWII, Sam served as a navy chaplain on the U.S.S. Hamlin which experienced combat in the western Pacific. He wrote a book about this, namely, a collection of his letters to his mother and his sister, A Chaplain Afloat and Ashore; since no serious information got past the censor, the letters are all chatty and playful, especially in the ways he signed off: "Padre," "Hamlin Sam," "Tokyo Ray," and "Sam Hill among the Buddhas."

Mustered out of the Navy, Sam Hill returned to Loyola University as spiritual counselor to the students (1946-55). During this period the civil rights movement emerged, with great efforts to integrate Loyola and to establish religious and political relations with other schools in New Orleans, such as Xavier

University. But Sam Hill was an unabashed racist, who unfortunately was endowed with eloquence and passion. Where ever possible he defended the tradition of segregation, sometimes in letters to the Jesuits of the province and other times at public forums, such as the Exchange Club. As the desegregation policy of the New Orleans province ripened (promulgated 1954) and as Archbishop Rummel wrote his own pastoral letter on desegregation, Sam Hill's voice contradicted the moral and political stance of Society and city, and was a genuine scandal.

Sam's career was divided thereafter into two ministries: first, high school counselor (St. John's in Shreveport (1959-61) and Jesuit High in New Orleans, 1971-76) and parochial ministry: pastor of St. Ann (1955-58), where he had served earlier in 1933-34, and then as assistant pastor (Sacred Heart Church in El Paso, St. John's Church in Shreveport, 1961-69; and St. Joseph Church, 1976-77). His public ministry ended abruptly in 1976 because of a severe stroke. He retired to Grand Coteau (1977-81) and eventually to the Infirmary in New Orleans, where he died in Jan 1981, just shy of 89 years old.

Samuel Hill Ray ranks with the genuine eccentrics of the Province. His service in the Navy refined his public performance. He was a most entertaining person, and did indeed enjoy the stage lights. His speeches resulted in at least of nine awards bestowed on him, such as: "Military Order of the World War" (1960); "Honorary Brew Master of Falstaff Brewery" (1954); "Mayoralty of New Orleans Certificate of Merit for Outstanding Service" (1955), etc. He also stayed in the public eye through his writings; there is no safe count of his publications, probably because they were printed in short runs by modest presses; we know of several westerns he wrote. Many of them, to be sure, have to do with his Navy experience ("Chaplain Afloat and Ashore"), and with his extended stay in El Paso ("Border Tales. The Fabulous Southwest" and "Picture-History of the Pass to the North"). In his last stay in New Orleans, Sam Hill was often found at a card table in the entrance to Maison Blanche department store, selling his books.



George Henry Raywood, S.J.

1974 - 77

Born in Cincinnati on February 22, 1914, George Henry Raywood attended grade school at Holy Family (1920-25), during which time the family moved to Miami where he attended the Gesù school (1925-29). He graduated in 1932 from the Spring Hill High School in Mobile. Influenced by his Jesuit teachers, he entered a two-year Novitiate in 1932, followed by a two-year Juniorate. He spent a year at the Jesuit school of philosophy in West Baden, IN (1936-1937), returning to Spring Hill College to complete his studies in philosophy (1937-1939). He spent his Regency, teaching three years at Jesuit High School in New Orleans (1939-1942). As expected, he went to St. Marys KS for Theology (1942-46), and was ordained on June 17, 1945. At this point his story takes a sharp turn east.

In September of 1948, he traveled to Ceylon (Sri Lanka) with Frs. Ponder and Fengler and Messrs. Hebert and Miller. In 1950 he was assigned to the Papal Seminary in Kandy, Ceylon. Shortly after he taught at St. Michael's College, Batticaloa. He spent the year 1953-54 doing language study in Kammala, Ceylon. For six years he labored at St. Michael's College, as teacher and assistant principal, then as rector and finally as rector and principal. He returned to the Province in 1960 as assistant to the Ceylon Mission Procurator and to the director of the Jesuit Seminary Fund. To ease George back into American life, a comparable soft assignment was given him as assistant Econome and Minister at the Provincial Residence in Ponchatoula, LA (1961-1963).

He then turned his attention to parish ministry. He served as assistant pastor of Holy Name of Jesus twice (1963-66, 1971-73) and of St. Charles Church in Grand Coteau (1973-74); he was pastor of the downtown Immaculate Conception (1966-69) and of St. Rita Church in Dallas (1969-71). He began preaching retreats at Our Lady of the Oaks in Grand Coteau (1974-77), becoming its superior in 1976. After tasting this ministry, he crossed Grand Coteau to St. Charles College where he joined the staff of the Jesuit Spirituality Center until his death.

One can't help noticing how frequently George was moved and how brief the stay he remained in a new ministry. He himself says that "In 1960 I returned to the States for three months and quickly became a full-fledged professional indoor drinker. . . Despite the monumental pile of guilt and depression, drinking was the only option. Denial, there is no alcoholism without it." Finally a community initiated an intervention and put in his hands a ticket to South Down in Toronto. He took his last drink in 1973. George himself describes this period of recovery bluntly, "My experience at Guest House has revealed to me that a crisis in life can also be a catalyst for a new and fully abundant life." "The Paschal Mystery has literally happened to me." When reintroduced into retreat ministry, people were stunned by his

compassion and his ability to take folks where they are in their spiritual journeys. To be sure, George's ears could hear the struggles of fellow alcoholics; and he became the mouth to the AA audiences who summoned him. His theme became "God loves me – warts and all." He came to describe his alcoholism as a *felix culpa*, a disaster which metamorphosed into recovery and a grace-filled ministry. "In my old age I have come alive." "[George] was most successful and most influential with a great variety of retreatants and recovering alcoholics. The number of his friends and the affection in which they held him was considerable, to say the least, but not altogether surprising; for, like Jesus, he was a compassionate healer."

A fair amount of his addresses to AA groups survive, all of which focus on the fact that as bad as George was – which he always described in brutal detail – so powerful and gracious were the hands that scooped him up. His devotion and labors for AA earned him two recognitions: a member of the Board of Directors of the National Clergy Council on Alcoholism and appointment by the Governor of Louisiana as a member of the Louisiana State Committee on Alcoholism.

Paraphrasing George, a homilist at his funeral said: "God did something with him, 'something good, something beautiful, surprising, never done before.'" And so the homilist has the last word, "He remained at his best, full of faith and serenity, right up to the moment of his peaceful death" on July 14, 1988.



Edward Joseph Romagosa, SJ

1988-91

Edward Francis Romagosa was born on Sept 22, 1924; the family moved to New Orleans so that he might attend Jesuit High School, graduating in 1941. On August 14 of that year he entered the Novitiate in Grand Coteau and followed the traditional formation path for young Jesuits: 2 years Novitiate and 2 years Juniorate; philosophy at Spring Hill College; and Regency at his alma mater. Fluent in French, he traveled to Louvain, Belgium for theology (1951-55). He was ordained on Aug 15, 1954 by Cardinal Leon Suenens

After earning an M.A. in English from Marquette University, he returned to the Juniorate, to become its stellar professor (1957-70). Students acclaimed his teaching; every young Jesuit whom he taught had nothing to say but praise for his insightfulness, his

urgency to help them know enough to speak, and to find fresh and insightful ways of communicating. In addition, Roma taught an evening course on art appreciation; the best machine we had was an overhead projector, but it sufficed for a man whose words were already art. During this time Roma started a doctorate in English at LSU; in fact he accumulated 30 graduate hours toward it. But reaching deep into his soul, he wrote to his Provincial:

I've concluded that I do not have the requisite temperament or respect or ambition for the doctoral degree in English literature; I do not feel that I could maintain through the few years that would be required for it the purity of intention that would allow for holiness or happiness.

As the Juniorate was being transferred to Spring Hill College, Roma turned his piety and eloquence to parish ministry. How blessed the parishioners of St. Rita's Parish in Dallas TX to hear four years of Roma's sermons. At his farewell-appreciation fete ("Arrivederci Roma") the Parish President said: "You only need listen to one of his homilies when he brings the Gospel message down to everyday practice, in words that have meaning and touch the core of human expression" (1973).

In 1974 he became pastor of Our Lady of Prompt Succor in Coteau LA (1974-78). Romagosa spent four years in Coteau only to return to Grand Coteau for another four years. For two years he served as Rector of St. Charles College then as assistant Novice Master. During this time he offered his services to various pastors in the diocese so that they may make their retreats and take a holiday.

This prayerful, eloquent man took up a new pastoral role, namely, retreat director. His first retreats were given at Maryhill Retreat House, Pineville LA (1982-84). The Jesuit Order quickly inserted him into its own retreats houses: Montserrat in Dallas (1984-88); Our Lady of the Oaks in Grand Coteau LA (1988-

91); and finally Manresa House of Retreats in Convent LA (1991-2009). By all accounts he preached quality retreats; and became a sought-after confessor,

He was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, which took a slow, debilitating toll on him. Despite all efforts to keep Edward Joseph Romagosa, SJ at Manresa, he eventually was taken to Our Lady of Wisdom Health Center where he died April 4, 2009. In conclusion, I quote what Roma's brightest student said to him late in Roma's life:

My mental DNA is directly traceable to you. . . You introduced me to a world of imagination captured in words of interlocking beauty and wonder. I have never left that world. I take, much too much for granted, that you will always be here. Your voice is always behind my voice as I open the same door to generations of bright university students.



Austin L. Wagner, S.J.

1944-49

Details about the education of Austin L. Wagner are few, but we know that he was born in Mobile and attended Spring Hill High School for four years (1901-1905). He entered the Novitiate in Macon GA on July 24, 1905, spending two years in the Novitiate and two more in the Juniorate. His philosophy studies were delayed until 1914-17. Instead he went to Grand Coteau twice for his Regency: 1911-14 and 1917-19. Typical of Regents, he was always loaded with extra-curricular activities, whether skill in them or not: dramatics, sodality, athletics and debating. He was sent to St. Louis University for theology and was ordained on June 27, 1921.

His ministry may be gathered around three apostolates. First of all, Austin served in parishes as assistant pastor, as a member of the famous Mission Band which traveled the South preaching and instructing (1935-37, 1940-42), and as a fixed person in a parish, Immaculate Conception, El Paso TX (1948) and Immaculate Conception Church in New Orleans (1949). Second, he served in the ministry of retreats, even becoming the director of Our Lady of the Oaks in Grand Coteau (1944-49). Finally, he also had internal ministry to Jesuits, namely "minister" of several Jesuit communities.

We know very little about this man except for the data stated above. Austin L. Wagner, SJ died in El Paso TX on June 15, 1956. He was buried in the Jesuit Cemetery at Spring Hill College, Mobile AL.