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## Maurice B. Walsh, SJ Papers

New England Jesuit Province Archives

New England Province of the Society of Jesus

Maurice B. Walsh SJ

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## New England Jesuit Archives Series Description



**Record Group:** 11.2, Records of Jamaica Mission / Region, Special Collections

**Series Name:** Rev. Maurice B. Walsh, S.J. (1916-2003) Papers

**Dates of Collection:** 1951-1997

**Size of Collection:** 1.0 linear feet: 2-5" boxes

### Biographical Sketch:

Maurice Bernard Walsh was born in Wakefield, MA on March 14, 1916. He was the son of Maunee F. and Agnes T. Walsh and had two sisters and a brother. He graduated from Wakefield High School in 1933 and attended Boston College for one year before entering the Jesuit novitiate, Shadowbrook, in Lenox, MA. He did the usual four years of ascetical and liberal arts studies there, then came to Weston College, Weston, MA to complete the three-year philosophy curriculum, followed by a year at Boston College where he earned a master's degree in Latin studies. His competency in this language was of great practical value in his later career as a canonist, researching and explaining official Church documents. Next he taught for a year at Fairfield Prep School, Fairfield, CT and in 1943 returned to Weston College for a year to begin theology studies which he completed in 1947 at the Jesuit faculty in Montreal, Canada. He next did a year of advanced ascetical studies and pastoral work in Pomfret, CT and after that was selected to earn a doctorate in canon law at the prestigious Gregorian University in Rome. He accomplished this in 1951 and returned to Weston College to teach systematic theology and canon law, and to serve as dean of the theology faculty and administrator for philosophy students. He was an excellent teacher, much respected by his students, but also much liked by them and by his colleagues for his friendly and approachable manner and his readiness to be of help. He was a very bright man, clear-minded and quick to learn.

In the early 1950's Fr. Walsh was called upon to assist Fr. John McEleney, S.J., the newly-appointed apostolic-administrator of the Church in Jamaica, West Indies. There was great need of a person with canonical expertise to deal with the many lingering pastoral problems there. By the time Vatican Council II began, Fr. McEleney had been ordained as Bishop of Kingston and he regularly brought Fr. Walsh with him to Council sessions to be his *peritus*, or expert, in canonical matters. Archbishop McEleney's successor, Archbishop Samuel Carter, S.J., likewise brought Fr. Walsh with him when he attended synods of bishops in Rome. As a result of these experiences Fr. Walsh was well-informed about developments, problems, and opportunities in the Church throughout the world.

In 1968 he transferred to the Jamaican Mission and served variously as assistant chancellor of the archdiocese of Kingston 1968-1993, vicar for religious communities 1968-1973, professor of moral theology and of canon law at St. Michael's Seminary in Jamaica 1970-1974, dean of the Archdiocesan marriage tribunal 1994-2000, consultant to the Antilles Bishops' Conference 1994-2000, and member of Archdiocesan Pastoral Council.

In 2000, he returned to the United States, living at Campion Center, formerly Weston College, Weston, MA. He died on October 1, 2003 at the age of 87. He is buried in the Jesuit cemetery at Campion Center.

He was a hard-working and disciplined man, and kept up to date with developments in his field, regularly attending meetings of canon law societies and writing articles for canon law publications. He was also a very compassionate man and in Jamaica, even when he was particularly intent on a piece of work, he would quickly

put it aside to make a sandwich for a needy person knocking at the door. He was compassionate, too, in his face-to-face dealings with hundreds of couples with marriage problems. He helped many bishops in the Antilles to set up marriage tribunals and trained many clergy to staff them. In helping to facilitate the Vatican Council's "aggiornamento" he assisted many communities of sisters to update their founding documents and to adapt and apply their original "inspiration" or "charisma" to contemporary needs.

As he reflected on his experience of Vatican Council II and his work with bishops, chancery staffs, and lay men and women, in the Caribbean, at Rome, in North America, he became more convinced and more emphatic in declaring that Vatican II was for the laity — that the role and dignity of laypersons, in the world, was what the Church needed to turn her attention to in our times. Since Fr. Walsh was well aware that canon law and its practitioners were often looked upon with distaste, if not outright rejection, he frequently reminded his hearers that the last and summary statement in the whole body of canon law is that the supreme law, and the law for interpreting and applying everything else in the body of canon law, is Charity, - that is, love. That loving and practical charity is what characterized Fr. Walsh throughout his personal and professional life.

### Scope and Content:

The collection consists of 1 linear foot of papers, 1 folder of photographs, 1 scrapbook and a commemorative award. The collection dates from 1951-1997. The papers are largely his writing on aspects of canon law, a copy of his 1951 dissertation: "Suarez and the Decretalists on the Dispensation of Vows and Promissory Oaths," and copies of columns written for the Jamaican Catholic Newspaper, the *Catholic Opinion* during the 1980s-1990s. The photographs are family portrait photos. The scrapbook includes family photos, photos of Jesuits and other small items.

**Access / Restrictions:** This collection is open to researchers.

### See:

- RG 12 Audiovisual : Photographs for 1 folder of photos.
- RG 12 Audiovisual: Scrapbooks for the oversize album.

### Also see:

- RG 12 Audiovisual: Compact discs and dvds for interviews conducted May 12-13, 2000 by Fr. Gerard Reid with Fr. Maurice Walsh, S.J. about the Jesuit Mission to Jamaica.

**Cite As:** Rev. Maurice B. Walsh, S.J. Papers  
Record Group 11.2, Special Collections of the Jamaica Mission / Region  
Archives of the New England Province of the Society of Jesus  
College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, MA

Archives of the New England Province of the Society of Jesus

**Record Group 11.2 Jamaica Mission / Region, Special Collections**  
**Special Collection: Rev. Maurice Bernard Walsh, S.J., 1916-2003**  
 1.0 Linear foot, 2-5" boxes

1951-1997

Title	Dates	Box	Folder
<b><i>Canon Law</i></b>			
"Casus" New England Houses, 1960s	1960s	1	1
The Concept of Law, According to St. Thomas, Paper	n.d.	1	2
<b><i>Internal Forum</i></b>			
Internal Forum, Congregatio pro Doctrina Fidei	1995	1	3
"Internal Forum" or Good Conscience Solution to the Problem of Invalid Marriage, Sixth Session	n.d.	1	4
<b><i>General Congregation 34</i></b>			
Commission IV, Revision of Law, Minutes and Documents	1994-1995	1	5
Maurice Walsh Notes, includes Diary January 3, 1995-March 22, 1995	1995	1	6
Revision of Law	1995-1997	1	7
<b><i>Lectures and Sermons</i></b>			
Domestic Exhortations, Weston College	1951-1952	1	8
Lectures, unpublished	1948-1967	1	9
Sermons	1968-1973	1	10
<b><i>Writings</i></b>			
Dissertation: Suarez and the Decretalists on the Dispensation of Vows and Promissory Oaths	1951	2	1
Loose papers from Dissertation	1952-1953	2	2
<i>Catholic Opinion</i> Columns, Folder 1 of 2	1980s-1990s	2	3
<i>Catholic Opinion</i> Columns, Folder 2 of 2	1990s	2	4
<i>Catholic Opinion</i> , clippings	1982-1992	2	5
<b><i>Varia</i></b>			
Reports to Province and Mission after General Congregation 32	1975	2	6
Freemasons	1990s	2	7
[Loose papers in scrapbook]	1960s-2000	2	8
<b><i>Also see:</i></b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RG12 Audiovisual—CDS and DVDS/ MSS and Personal Papers, for interviews with Fr. Maurice Walsh, S.J. about the Jesuit Mission in Jamaica</li> <li>• RG 12 Audiovisual—Scrapbooks for photo album and commemorative award stored in oversize flat box</li> <li>• RG 12 Photographs, Personnel, 1 folder MS photos—family portrait photos</li> </ul>			