Chapter XIV

SPECIAL STUDIES (1945-1968)

Earlier it was stated that as provincial, Fr. John McEleney (later a bishop and archbishop) was a far-visioned energizer of special studies during his years in office. He was firmly convinced of a need for more trained personnel for the colleges. He also favored greater inroads into subjects which were not the standard staples of Jesuit formation, but which the colleges needed in order to be preeminent. Perhaps, too, he believed, Jesuits in New England had kept themselves too insular in their choice of degree-granting institutions and were too convinced of their competence in whatever was studied in the scholasticates. There might have been some triumphalism as a result of the heroizing, especially in rhetoric classes and recreation rooms, of Fr. Timothy Brosnahan's writings vis-a-vis President Charles Eliot of Harvard, although Harvard was the secular university to which most Jesuits had turned for special studies between 1936 and 1945.

Whatever Fr. McEleney's thoughts (and he did express himself in his own way along these lines), he consulted widely on potential candidates. He appointed Fr. Arthur J. Sheehan to the new post of province director of studies, and indicated his willingness to take a chance, even a tall one, on possible candidates for graduate work. It should be pointed out that the success, by which Fr. James H. Dolan, in the fall of 1944, had been able to pay off early and fully the mortgage on Weston,
meant that the province was better equipped financially to shoulder the costs of these added special studies which Fr. McEleney fostered.

But it was Fr. McEleney's encouragement to higher graduate studies that made his contribution conspicuous and lasting. Everyone in authority over studies, if he believes in them, is glad to point out those, even a few, whom he has encouraged and even recruited. Yet it is no exaggeration to say that an over-proportionally large number of the trained men in the New England Province owe this training to Fr. McEleney's insight and courage.


To Roman ecclesiastical higher studies went — John F. Broderick, Merrill F. Green, Francis X. Lawlor, Richard V. Lawlor, John J. Lynch, Fred L. Moriarty, John V. O'Connor, Thomas G. O'Callaghan, Daniel J. Saunders, John J. Walsh and
Maurice J. Walsh.


Special studies in the classics were done in Greece and Italy by Leo P. McCauley and John J. Sampey. Even if there were indeliberate omissions, the listings set forth a highly creditable performance on the five annual status assignments made
Another notable change made in studies by Fr. McEleney was the arrangement whereby regents could take their summer school courses not in a place by themselves with special teachers, but in classes at Boston College and, gradually, at other Catholic summer sessions, particularly Fordham and Georgetown. This course of action did not commend itself to all so-called "graver" fathers, but was adhered to during Fr. McEleney's tenure. The province later reverted to the older type of summer session at Holy Cross until 1957.

One plan that was proposed during this time would allow third-year philosophers at Weston to take their elective course (actually one course), called a disciplina specialis at the Boston College Graduate School. While this was warmly urged by the Dean and Assistant Dean of the Graduate School, it did not win approval from the Weston officials with whom it was discussed. Some new understanding did arise about the compatibility of different kinds of electives with a philosophy major during the third year when the philosophers of that year were candidates for the master's degree. This clarification made it more possible for science majors to obtain the master's degree in philosophy.

What Fr. McEleney might have done on the 1950 status about special studies, especially for priests, is a matter of conjecture. His appointment as Vicar Apostolic in Jamaica early in 1950 removed his control from the 1950 status and the special studies program. The increased master's program for regents at
Boston College, inaugurated in 1949 with five students, was continued with five new regent students and one continuing student. No new students went to Fordham's Spellman Hall, but one continued from the previous year. Fr. Joseph A. Devenny, home after long service at Baghdad, began a doctorate in Middle East Studies at Harvard. Of the eighteen tertians, one resumed studies previously begun in 1948 prior to tertianship. One (Fr. James Ryan) began Roman studies. None of the remaining sixteen were allocated to studies. In this complex narrative in which so many qualities of Fr. James H. Dolan have been praised, one must say on this point -- "In hoc non laudo."

From 1951 to 1956, a trend upward can again be observed. The figures are available in the annual survey of special studies in the Jesuit Educational Quarterly, a magazine unfortunately discontinued shortly after Father Edward B. Rooney was removed as President of the Jesuit Educational Association and this over-all organization with its parts, weak and strong, left to shift for itself. These numbers including the carrying-over of Fr. McEleny's earlier selections as well as the new blood show for 1951-52, thirty special students; for 1952-53, twenty-seven; for 1953-54, twenty-five; for 1954-55, twenty-nine; for 1955-56, thirty-two; and for 1956-57, thirty-two.

Perhaps more significant of educational trends during this time (1951-56) were the annual assignments first of two and then of three first-year philosophers to study in three European Jesuit houses -- Eegenhoven, Vals, Pullach. The first two
philosophers to Eegenhoven were George MacRae and Oliva Blanchette. With time from 1952 to 1956 there also went there Gerald Kirk, Frank Greaney, Michael A. Fahey and Edward O'Flaherty. To Vals were assigned Robert Sproule, Robert G. McMillan, William Russell, James Greeler, George D. Fitzpatrick and Daniel Lusch. At Pullach, there studied Hugh Riley, Robert J. Braunreuther, William A. Barry, Frederick J. O'Brien, John J. Hollohan and Frederick F. FitzGerald. By this means a living knowledge of French or German was acquired, and many of these people taught one of these languages during the first two years of their regency. When they studied during their third year, as most did, they had easy access to a language requirement.

Fr. General encouraged this type of intercontinental arrangement. He ran up, however, against the possibility of such excellent students being deprived not only of the master's degree, but even of the bachelor's degree. Hence, inquiries were made at the request of Fr. General through the J. E. A. in the Fall of 1952. This inquiry wished to learn from the Jesuit degree-granting school in each province, whether it could at least arrange for such a transfer of credits from their European scholasticates to justify the award of its bachelor's degree. Through the New England college prefect of studies, an agreement was made with Boston College to have the sixty credits of the first two years of philosophy abroad made applicable to the Boston College A.B. degree through the Weston School of Philosophy.
Since the European records received in the provincial's office were often sketchy, it took time, patience, conferences and registrar-type expertise to construct a transcript of these courses and credit equivalents. These transcripts were necessary for all graduate school applications except the initial one at Johns Hopkins where the Egenhoven transcript (the best in form of the three) was accepted easily in 1956. Since ultimately practically everyone of these men worked for some higher academic degree, these transcripts signed by the college prefect and sealed with Fr. Thomas L. McLaughlin's great seal of the province were very helpful.

Work abroad in the third year, although quite parallel to that which at Weston obtained a master's degree in philosophy, could not result in such a degree since no graduate school could accept more than six graduate credits in transfer. For the master's degree, therefore, Fr. General never made a request. But that any possible upper-division prerequisites as well as general background be made manifest, a separate and authenticated document showed what had been studied in third year as well as in first and second to acquire the ecclesiastical licentiate in philosophy. Although the permission of Boston College for accepting this junior and senior abroad study had been obtained in 1952 and could have been applicable to a bachelor's degree in 1953, nothing was done with these disorganized and scattered records until 1957-58, when three scholastics were in process of applying for entrance into Fordham and Catholic University.
The need for transforming these early European records and *studienbucher* into U. S. terminology ended since the practice of sending juniors abroad for philosophy came to an end after 1956. Fr. Coleran preferred to concentrate on increasing the numbers of theologians studying in European scholasticates. The policy was again resumed when two philosophers were sent to Pullach both in 1964 and 1965.

It might be pointed out here that, in the era of the vice-province and of the early province, it was customary to send two scholastics annually from Shadowbrook to Heythrop for philosophy. The following New England men had this experience -- Leo P. McCauley, John P. Foley, William F. Donaldson, William F. Finneran and Ernest B. Foley. The early candidates to the Society from Jamaica, with its British-type secondary school system, had all their initial training in England. One can notice no diminution in the vocations of those in the early experience, while there has been a loss of seven out of sixteen in the second experiment and of four out of four in the final one. Five of these nine left the Society as priests. Theirs was the unsettled period following Vatican II and the 31st General Congregation, when a diminution of the value of the priesthood accompanied a lessened sense of religious commitment.

A statement on the common time generally allocated during this period for a year of special studies during the regency years is in order. When the program began in earnest in numbers with one year of study at St. Louis, and then at the study house (St. Ignatius Residence) at Boston College, the year
was the first of regency year. Then, for one or possibly two years, the regent used his training usually in his special field. With time this sequence of study-first, teach-second, was modified. By 1949 when a year of study during regency became very common, the all but universal rule was study in the last (usually the third) year of regency.

As a help to the school (most commonly a secondary one), the first and second year teaching regent had his Weston's master's degree with the possibility, if not always the actuality, of twelve to eighteen upper-division credits in his specialty. This possibility had come about when, in 1932, Fr. William J. McGarry, who as the philosopher's prefect of studies had encouraged many academic interests by private study or by special Sunday academies, introduced one full-fledged elective into each of the three years at Weston. Previously, the regular curriculum had merely made provision for a choice of classics or calculus in third year. Fr. McGarry's arrangement was really a revolutionary advance.

If 1932 were 1972, these electives undoubtedly would have been taken at Boston College where a greater variety of professors in each discipline would have been available for these elective subjects. With these electives at Weston, this ordinarily meant that one teacher with his excellent ability but limited outlook taught for three years in one elective field. And it meant depriving schools of extra teachers, or failing to send these men for further studies. With time this situation was remedied by having professors commute chiefly from Boston College.
or, occasionally, from Holy Cross to teach these electives when the same professors could have had these philosophers in their ordinary college courses and also when a variety of professors could have given wider academic exposure to the philosophers.

The Boston College Department of English did supply a variety of its excellent staff to teach the philosophers during these later years. But despite these early might-have beens which did ultimately eventuate, what Fr. McGarry did in 1932 was truly an academic breakthrough which made possible, even though later, other academic advantages. Fr. McGarry, who died so young (at 47), is chiefly remembered as the founding editor of Theological Studies. He was a great catalyst of intellectual endeavor at Weston, especially among the philosophers whose tilt he raised in the early thirties of this century.

The statement that from 1949 to the time when third year philosophy was discontinued, and when it was common to have one year of special studies in regency, had its exceptions. Where a degree was meant ultimately to be a doctorate in a science or in some mathematical subject such as economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, regents were given the entire regency for such studies during many of the stages that are indicated in these evolving and declining graduate study programs. While this earlier age made these specialties more easily mastered, they often left a man in theology or in the priesthood disinterested in his major field.
Even those seemingly avid for such higher studies when regency began became disillusioned during their study or shortly after finishing it. Some left the Society not knowing how they could be, as they said, true hyphenated priests. Others remained hoping for some better world than the one for which they had been trained -- apparently too early for their own good. Such factors gave one pause in selecting special students, especially for early doctorates.

Just as the then Fr. McEleney pushed doctoral studies vigorously during his tenure as provincial from the status of 1945 to that of 1949, an analogous policy is attributable to Fr. James E. Coleran and his successor, Fr. John V. O'Connor. However in this phase there was, in addition to initiating doctoral studies, a serious effort to have more special masters degrees for secondary school work.

It had become clear, once the New England Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools had become an accrediting association with initial and regular ten year visits to secondary schools as well as colleges, that something more than a Weston M.A. in Philosophy with its second major (so to speak) was needed. Hence there was a burgeoning of full-time but terminal master's degrees for secondary school teachers and administrators.

Pragmatic considerations, if nothing else, required a looking into master's programs which were not only possible in the summer, but into those which were conducting exclusively in the summer. These special summer-only programs had their best wares available only in the summer. The most striking example
was the Breadloaf School of English, run by Middlebury College, but on its own remote and mountainous campus.

To this campus, its Directors Reginald Cooke and later Paul Cubeta, brought scholarly professors from distinguished schools. Fr. Paul McGrady, who has since left the Society, was the pioneer there. Soon a regular Jesuit colony was set up in its own cottage with its own facility for saying and hearing Mass. The numbers expanded and, like Jesuit students on other campuses in summer, they soon gave up the cottage and lived in the dormitories. Other provinces after a time sent students to Breadloaf. Imitation was a sincere form of flattery.

Another very prestigious summer-only program was brought to the attention of the province by J. C. O'Brien when he was a theologian at Weston. This was an arrangement at Harvard under the auspices of its School of Education which permitted a candidate to spend four summer sessions in a degree-granting program. With education courses, one might combine courses in other disciplines. The first one enrolled in this program was J. C. O'Brien. In subsequent years, he was joined by Robert J. Starrett, James J. Hosie, Robert E. Manning, and Arthur Chai. This program was too advantageous to last and Harvard discontinued it.

Three other summer-only programs use was made. There was the Latin program at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut. After Jesuit candidates lived initially and remotely from the campus with the LaSalette Fathers, a "frat" house, empty during the summer, was hired annually. It afforded
sleeping quarters, a recreation center, and a place for Mass. Trinity did not quite live up to its billing in Latin. It did supply one degree in English as a foundation for a late doctoral degree and several in the classics.

Very superior in its variety of disciplines, and limited to summer clientele, was a Master's degree at Wesleyan University, in Middletown, Conn. There only college dormitories were available. Mass was easily supplied in two nearby churches and at the Xaverian brothers' residence at Xavier High School. Programs were excellent in history, mathematics, literature, and also in other subjects of which the scholastics had less occasion to avail themselves. At Purdue University there were similar summer arrangements in physics and mathematics.

While the major thrust in these five programs was to aid the secondary schools at home, in Jamaica and in Baghdad, the degrees also served as first stages toward doctorates for college use. One special summer program regrettably never received any students. This was the program at the southwestern branch at Santa Fe, New Mexico of St. John College Annapolis. It afforded a carefully graded degree sequence in the great books. It might have enriched the work of a philosophy teacher or of others who dealt in the history of ideas. Efforts in 1967 and 1968 to interest people all failed, and it would appear that it has not drawn any candidates in later years.

During many of these summers, National Science Foundation courses and grants aided in or toward master's degree, or for enrichment in sciences, mathematics and modern languages.
Especially worthy of mention were science and mathematics courses at Holy Cross whose Jesuit N. S. F. liaison men were most cooperative with the province. Tufts College had a helpful summer Latin program geared particularly to actual instruction in Latin. In the early years after 1957, the Boston College Summer Session offered first year regents two educational credit courses to enlarge the background of newly assigned teachers. These courses were not always appreciated. So with time these regents studied their own specialty at Boston College or elsewhere.

As to the so-called Sweet Method of imparting Latin grammar came into a temporary vogue, the province for some years had priests attending the summer session of the University of Michigan. For the most part, the participants could make use of an authorized list of boarding facilities supplied by the Detroit Province Director of Special Studies. Meals were easily obtained in the cafeteria of a sisters' hospital. It was once proposed that a Jesuit residence for students be acquired in Ann Arbor for students at the University of Michigan, but the proposal did not materialize.

Two points should be noted about these special summer programs. To Fr. Coleran is owed the foresight to allow the valuable studies at Breadloaf, and then to approve the move on to Trinity, Wesleyan and Purdue where men had to live either in small cottages with other Jesuits, or in dormitories with externs as well as fellow Jesuits. Fr. Coleran initiated such programs and Fr. John V. O'Connor continued and expanded them.
But something more was needed. This was the permission of the local bishops to attend these schools. No problems were incurred in any of them or in any of the other summer places where study took place even for one individual. One province refused to contact a bishop in its area because of his alleged unwillingness to grant permission and placed the task on the N. E. Province. Even here a carefully prepared letter on the prestige of winning the N. S. F. grant brought a gracious answer to the provincial's secretary who had written the letter.

Of all the bishops contacted, none could rival the interest, kindness and generosity of Bishop Robert F. Joyce of Burlington, Vermont, who authorized Sunday Masses on the campus of Breadloaf not only for the Catholic help, the non-Catholics who voluntarily attended, but also for students and teaching staff and their families. He arranged with the pastor involved so that no unpleasantness would arise. This permission was particularly helpful in the case of the second director whose wife and three sons were Catholics. Of all these summer places, Breadloaf afforded the greatest opportunity for an apostolic thrust. It was a Camelot moment and more of which to be proud and to be grateful to the participants in these summer special studies adventures. In all these places there were a Jesuit presence of good that was diffusivum sui.

Another development in housing stems from considerations of where scholastics might live when engaged full-time year-round in special studies. From the earliest years it was required that this study be done while residing in a
Jesuit community even though a priest might live in a rectory, on in a convent establishment, but not yet in an apartment. Hence studies for scholastics had to be found at Boston College, Holy Cross, Fordham, Georgetown, Carroll House, St. Ignatius or Loyola College in Baltimore.

Access to secular universities could be had from Boston residences, some New York city ones, and St. Louis. But no arrangement appeared possible for scholastics so that they could attend a distinguished New England institution such as Yale. At a province meeting in Baltimore in September 1960, the proposal was made that the N. E. Province consider establishing a study house at Yale. A similar proposal was made about a much frequented university beyond the Appalachians, but nothing came of it. The N. E. Province did respond. Fr. Coleran after consultation authorized an approach to the Chancellor of the Hartford Archdiocese. During the Christmas holidays a meeting was held with this archdiocesan official, Msgr. Joseph R. Lacey. The one assurance he wished was that the proposed residence was for students and not for some apostolic center to parallel or rival the St. Thomas More Center at Yale.

With this assurance received, Msgr. Lacey promised to refer the matter to Archbishop Henry J. O'Brien. In early February, 1961, Fr. Coleran was informed that, if he put the request in writing, it would be granted. A formal request was made and quickly granted. This permission led to the purchase of a house which became the Virgil Barber House with Fr. William F. Finneran as first superior. This house in New Haven honored
Virgil Barber whose family had first settled in Windsor, Conn., and later settled down for some generations in Simsbury, Conn. It was also in Waterbury, Conn., where Virgil had exercised the Episcopal ministry, and that he had first considered a conversion to Catholicism. It might have been appropriate to name the villa at Sunapee, New Hampshire, after Barber due to its proximity to Claremont where Barber had established the first Jesuit school in New England. This naming, which would have been short-lived, was precluded by an earlier choice of the name of Berchmans.

It seems ironical to see the little use that the province has made of what was a hopeful and expensive venture in New Haven. At least, it helped to educate Doctor Anthony ("Tony") F. Salderini and Gerald Sabo. The hopes for special summer programs at Yale never really blossomed, nor did the expectations of the use of the M. A. T. in Teaching of which Yale once boasted. Would its sale help the cash-flow? That much was written by 1976. The house has now been sold.

To get a picture of those engaged in full-time graduate work from 1957 to 1968 the following full-time student figures are taken from the JEO March issues from 1957 to 1969: thirty-four, thirty-eight, forty-five, forty-five, fifty-two, fifty-two, fifty-one, forty-nine, sixty-two, seventy-four, sixty-four, and seventy-four. These year-round full-time student statistics plus the unlisted ones of organized summer degree programs are a credit to one deceased provincial and one living ex-provincial of New England. They creditably did their part in
fostering the intellectual apostolate to which Fr. General Pedro Arrupe rallied the Society on Christmas of 1976.