

Fr. William McInnes, SJ

by Grace Cotter Regan

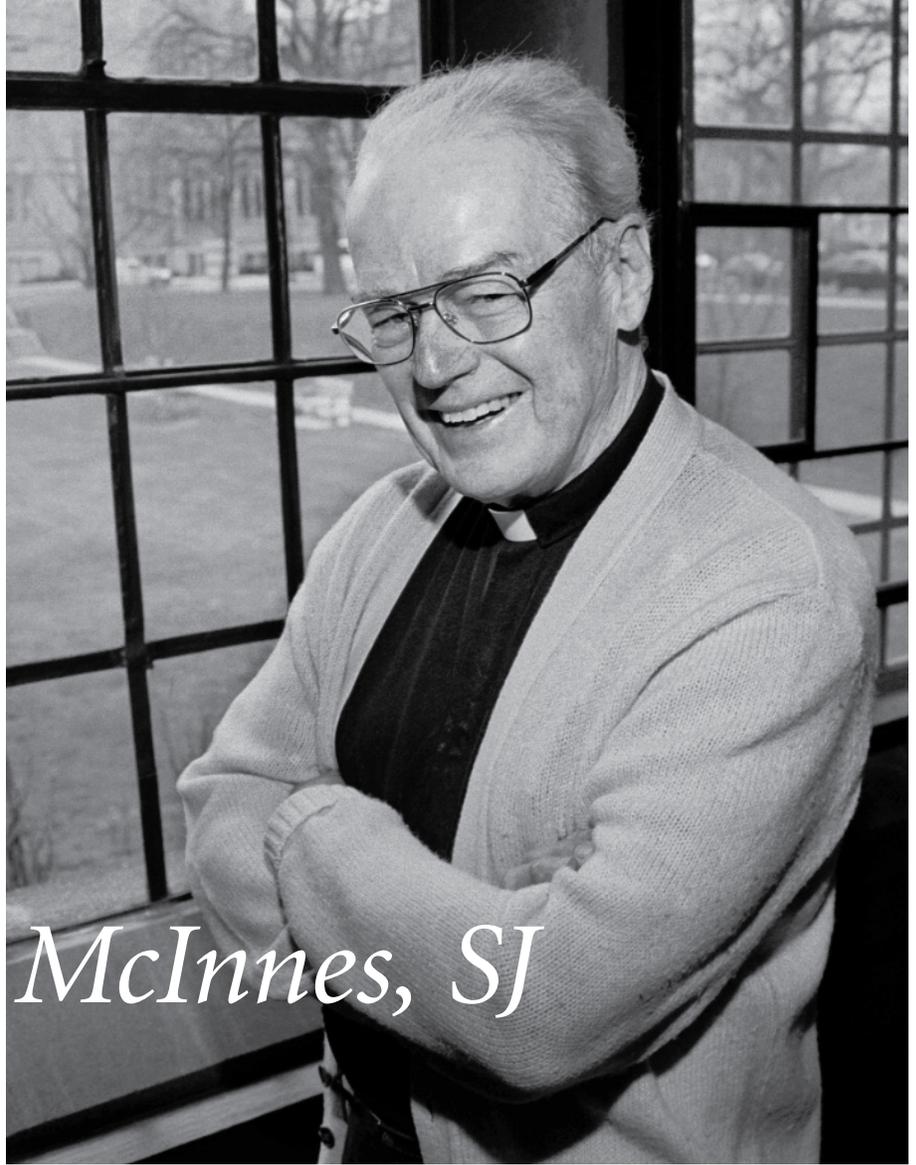


Photo by Justin Knight

Fr. William McInnes, SJ, is a Jesuit of the New England Province who has made his home at Boston College for many years. He has been called a friend, tennis partner, professor, mentor, chaplain, advisor, administrator, spiritual guide, and college president.

At 85 years of age and 62 years a Jesuit, Fr. McInnes now finds himself in a new place . . . with new goals for his vocation. He wants to focus on the spirituality of aging and he has the perfect setting to begin his work in his new community at Campion Center in Weston, Massachusetts.

While at Boston College, Fr. McInnes began the Campion Visitation program. He would take groups of students, faculty, and staff to Weston to visit his fellow Jesuits in the health care center. He was committed to the program and engaged many members of the Boston College alumni community in the program as well. I recently spent a

morning with Fr. McInnes at Campion Center. After celebrating Mass with the Jesuit community we sat down for a chat between old friends.

Fr. McInnes's new challenge in his life is the learning curve of the aging process he calls "this third age" and the changes that are inherent in the process. Fr. McInnes never expected that the learning curve would be so steep, but he is willing to make this a part of his vocation. He explained, "As we age or get sick, we lose control of our lives. Who am I and what is my purpose? When you are a person who has always been in charge and a person who was

“As alumni chaplain, Fr. McInnes was the face of the Jesuits for many alumni. He was the one who could connect with them on a deep sacramental level in a way that none of us as lay people could.”

~ Dianne Duffin, associate director, BC Alumni Office of Spirituality & Service

USF photo archives



Fr. McInnes has had a long career in higher education. He is pictured here during his tenure as president of the University of San Francisco from 1972–1977. Fr. McInnes also served as Fairfield University’s president from 1964–1972.

loss. Change is hard, and with aging, one’s ideas of modesty and humility have to be adapted. Therein lies the challenge.”

Fr. McInnes has a new perspective on Campion Health Care Center and the transition process for Jesuits as they move to this next phase of their Jesuit lives.

He smiled as we spoke and started talking about the men and their stories. They are rich stories and he has had an opportunity to reconnect with men he has known for years. The most difficult challenge is the loss of friendship. He was talking about his dear friend Fr. Henry Murphy, SJ, who recently went to God. Fr. McInnes said, “I saw him going down the hall the day before he died, and I will forever have that image in my mind.

able to get things done, there is both frustration and humility in having to ask for help or having little control over changes.” He went on to say, “However, there is a grace in this process. One learns how to truly be present and to be with people who are alone or struggling. We don’t really know how someone truly feels until we too have felt that angst, loneliness, or sense of



Fr. McInnes with Grace Cotter Regan at the 2008 Jesuit GALA.

Every story is an unfinished story.”

Even at Campion Center, Fr. McInnes’s calendar is full. He continues meetings with the various groups he has worked with at Boston College, and their new meeting venue is Campion Center. He has even planned his Class of 1944 reunion at Campion this fall! His goal is to stay involved, but more importantly, to introduce his friends and colleagues to the men and the place he presently calls home. As we parted ways, Fr. McInnes said, “I loved administration. I always got things done. Getting things done is not the same as thinking about it.” Fr. McInnes isn’t thinking about what he needs to do; he is getting it done.

Fr. William McInnes, SJ, is the chaplain for the Boston College Alumni Association.



Fr. McInnes celebrates 50 years in the priesthood at the 2007 Jesuit Jubilee surrounded by family and friends.



To learn more about Campion Center and the Campion Renewal Center, please go to www.sjnen.org