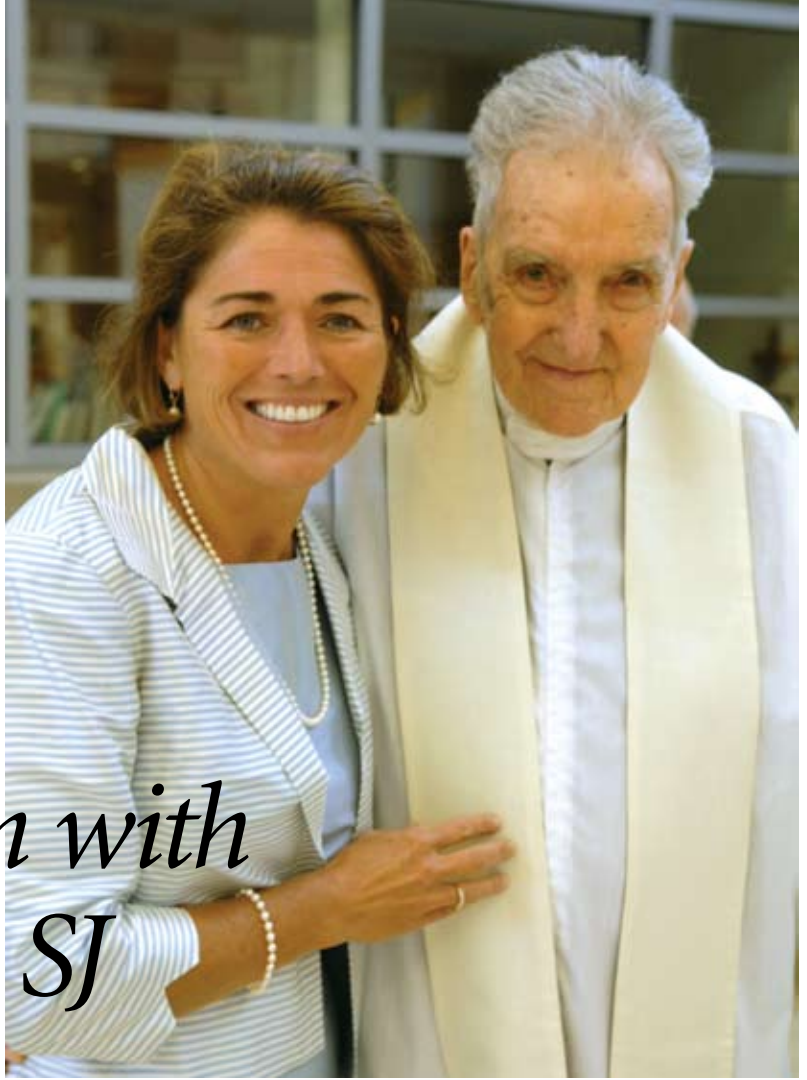


Grace Regan and Fr. Malley at the 2007 Jesuit Jubilee.  
Fr. Malley celebrated 50 years in the Society of Jesus.



## A Conversation with Fr. Jim Malley, SJ

by Grace Cotter Regan

Fr. Jim Malley, SJ, is an attorney, naval officer, missionary, prison chaplain, administrator, mentor, campus minister, law school chaplain, mystic, counselor, son, brother, uncle and friend. He was happily missioned to Campion Center in 2005; his ministry now is to pray for the Church and the Society.

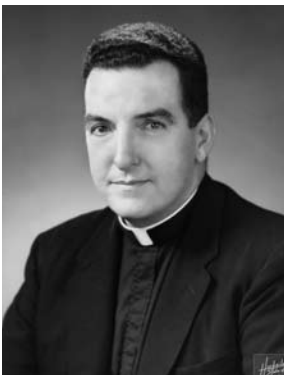
Fr. Malley greets you at Campion Center with a warm smile that makes you feel like you are the only person in the world. He walks with the assistance of a walker and your visit might be delayed because of his vertigo, but on a good day, he will accompany you to Mass in the chapel and share in the delight of your visit by engaging in a wonderful conversation.

Fr. Malley's journey to the Society was unusual, and he is quite comfortable with his path and choices. I first met Fr. Jim when he was a member of the Barat House Jesuit community at Boston College's Newton campus

where Fr. Jim served as chaplain to the Boston College Law School. Fr. Jim's first gift of many to me was introducing me to the works of one of his intellectual and spiritual mentors, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ.

After graduating from Dartmouth College and Harvard Law School, Fr. Jim became an accomplished attorney. Yet, he was constantly searching for meaning and one All Saints Day while working in Rockingham County, he saw folks coming out of church and he thought, "You're spending about 40 minutes a week on something you think is the most important thing in your life. You'd better look into this." And so he did and a diocesan priest steered him to the Jesuits a couple of years later. The Jesuits met his needs — adventure, intellectual life and service of the poor. Fr. Jim entered the novitiate at age 35; as he says, "Jung said that at 35, everything comes together."

Fr. Jim has worked with law students at both Georgetown



Fr. Malley circa 1965, courtesy of Alice Howe, curator of collections at the New England Province Archives.

*We are not human beings having a spiritual experience.  
We are spiritual beings having a human experience.*

*~ Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ*

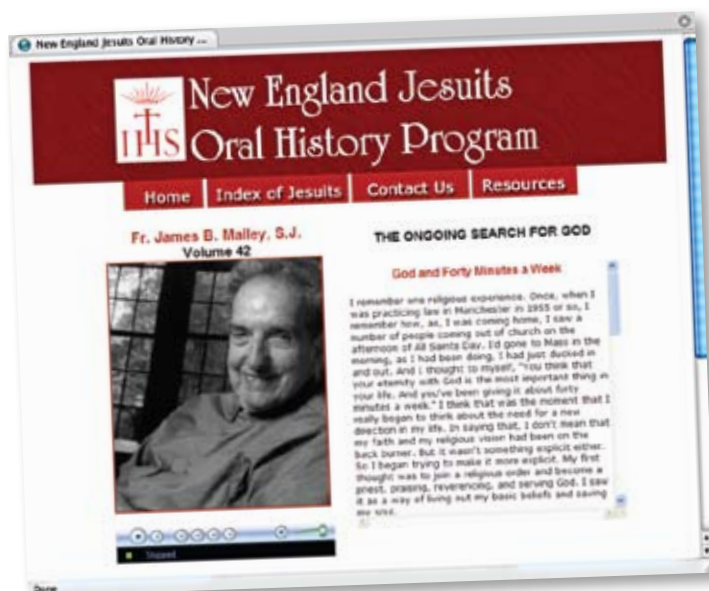
and Boston College. He loved his work with the law students and faculty and described his ministry style as one of talking with people. He described his experiences as profound in that he discovered the gift of listening. Law school can be a very lonely place—the competition and pressure on the students to achieve among the best of the best can bring incredible pressure. He learned the importance of just being present. Accompanying folks through a crisis can be a moment of grace.

Fr. Jim also found his work in prison ministry to be equally humbling and profound. He says, “Many of the women have difficult home and domestic lives, but many also have strong elements of support and love in their families and at home. These elements gave them immense strength. What oppressed them and what I tried to address was the fact that the life in a penal institution demeaned and devalued them as persons worthy even of respect, let alone love. They all felt that. My message was that God respected and loved them and they should respect and love themselves as persons of inner beauty and worth. I tried to encourage them to ‘hang on’ and believe in themselves as God does because God is a good judge of our worth. I’m grateful for my ministry to be part of that support group in the Lord’s name.”

Gratitude is a very important value for Fr. Jim. He is profoundly grateful to his parents, his grandmother and his siblings for making him an open, spiritual and grounded human being. He is grateful to the men and women in prison who entrusted him with their stories and shared their challenges and desire to know Jesus and the gospel. He is grateful to the law students who asked him to listen. He is grateful to his many friends who continue to love and challenge him to grow. Finally, he is grateful to his brother Jesuits and the Society for giving him the opportunity to be a Jesuit and a follower of Ignatius. Fr. Jim has made himself available to the needs of the Society. His last mission is at Campion Center where he has been happily missioned to pray for the Church and the Society. When I asked him how he dedicates himself to that awesome task, Fr. Jim chuckled and said, “It’s not as easy as you might think; I mean I have a lot to do every day, and seem to have an endless number of things to distract me. Believing in my own prayer takes an act of faith.”

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ, said, “The most satisfying thing in life is to have been able to give a large part of one’s self to others.” Fr. Jim Malley has done just that and his faith, humility, wonder and awe of the world and genuine love of others will be his legacy.

*Credit: With assistance from the New England Jesuit Oral History Program*



*Listen to Fr. Jim Malley, SJ, on the New England Jesuits Oral History Program website at:*

*[www.jesuitoralhistory.org/Malley.htm](http://www.jesuitoralhistory.org/Malley.htm)*