

Very Rev. John F. Fenlon, P.S.S., Papers

Biographical Note

Very Rev. John F. Fenlon, P.S.S., Papers (Born: 1873, Chicago, IL; Provincial, U.S. Sulpicians, 1925-1943; Died: 1943, Delvin Grove, MI). Rev. Fenlon attended St. Mary's Seminary and was ordained for the Archdiocese of Chicago in 1896. After serving at Holy Name Cathedral for two years, he entered the Society of St. Sulpice and was sent to Rome to earn his S.T.D. at the Minerva. Upon completing his degree, he was sent to Issy, France, where he made his Solitude. His first assignment as a Sulpician was to the faculty of St. Joseph Seminary in Dunwoodie, NY, where he taught Sacred Scripture. In 1904 he was sent to Washington, D.C., to serve as superior for the first U.S. Solitude, St. Austin's College. He was appointed the president of Divinity College of The Catholic University of America in 1911, a position he held for the next 13 years when he was appointed superior of the Sulpician Seminary in Washington, D.C. During the First World War he served as secretary of the Administrative Committee of the National Catholic War Council and, later, National Catholic Welfare Conference, where he played an influential behind-the-scenes role in its organization and development. In 1925 he was appointed the second provincial of the U.S. Sulpician community and the eighth superior of St. Mary's Seminary, a position he held until his death in 1943. He oversaw the fundraising campaign and construction of the Roland Park campus of St. Mary's Seminary, which stands as a memorial of his devotion to the work of St. Sulpice in this country. This collection contains both official and personal papers, including correspondence, administrative and subject files, and photographs. Of special interest to researchers are the records relating to his work with the National Catholic War Council.

Bibliography

Christopher J. Kauffman, *Tradition and transformation in Catholic culture: The Priests of Saint Sulpice in the United States from 1791 to the Present*. Macmillan, 1988.

Douglas J. Slawson, *The Foundation and First Decade of the National Catholic Welfare Council*. Catholic University of America Press, 1992.

Extent: Size: 9.5 records storage boxes and 4 document cases.

Date range: c. 1897-1943

Scope & Content

Series 1: Correspondence

Subseries 1.1: General, c. 1903-1943 – 2 records storage boxes

This subseries contains the general correspondence that covers nearly all of Rev. Fenlon's priestly ministry. Incoming and outgoing correspondence has been separated and arranged alpha-chronologically by correspondent and contains letters from fellow Sulpicians, alumni of

Sulpician institutions, personal friends, and professional colleagues. For ease of access, correspondence with women religious can be found in subject files organized by religious community.

Subseries 1.2: Subject Files, c. 1904-1943 – 1 records storage box

This subseries contains correspondence placed in files organized by subject to centralize letters regarding a specific event, issue, or organization, including the St. Paul Guild, the Irish American organizations he was active with, and the Committee for Catholic Refugees from Germany.

Subseries 1.3: Family, c. 1893-1941 – 2 records storage boxes and 1 document case

This series contains the correspondence between Rev. Fenlon and members of his extended family and is comprised of several thousand letters. This subseries has not been organized.

Series 2: Society of St. Sulpice

This series contains the files relating to the Society of St. Sulpice. The material has been organized by province and is comprised mainly of correspondence.

Subseries 2.1: Province of Canada, c. 1920-1941 – 1 folder

Subseries 2.2: Province of France and Superior Generalate, c. 1927-1941 – 1 folder

Subseries 2.3: Province of the United States, c. 1916-1943

This series contains the files regarding the work of the Society of St. Sulpice in the United States during Rev. Fenlon's term as Provincial. Individual Sulpician Houses (institutions administered by the Sulpicians) are arranged alphabetically by institution name. Location information is also indicated.

Series 3: National Catholic Welfare Conference, c. 1917-1936 - 2 records storage boxes and 1 document case

This series contains the correspondence and subject files maintained by Rev. Fenlon regarding his work with the National Catholic War Council and its successor, the National Catholic Welfare Conference (NCWC).

Subseries 3.1 – Correspondence, c. 1915-1939, n.d.- 1 records storage box

This series has the correspondence maintained by Rev. Fenlon regarding his work with the NCWC, c. 1915-1934, undated. Correspondence addressed to Card. James Gibbons of Baltimore and different NCWC offices that he was copied on can also be found in these files.

Subseries 3.2 - Subject Files, c. 1917-1936 - 1 records storage box and 1 document case

This series contains the subject files Rev. Fenlon maintained during his term of service with the NCWC, c. 1918-1936, which has been organized into nine subseries: General, Administrative Committee of Bishops, Bureaus, Committees, Correspondence, Knights of Columbus, Meetings of the Hierarchy, Miscellaneous, and Printed Material.

Series 4 - Homilies, Lectures and Talks, c. 1903-1939, n.d. – 6 folders

This series contains the addresses, homilies, and talks of Rev. Fenlon that were found in his papers.

Series 5: Personal, c. 1896-1943, n.d. – 12 folders

This series contains biographical information about Rev. Fenlon as well honors and awards and subject files.

Series 6: Printed Material, c. 1880-1943, n.d. – 1 document case

This series contains the publications found with Rev. Fenlon's papers.

Note: Materials created by and relating to Rev. Fenlon can be found in the three collections that comprise the Associated Archives at St. Mary's Seminary & University. Other institutions with materials on Rev. Fenlon include Special Collections at The Catholic University of America, where the records for the National Catholic Welfare Conference are on deposit.