

## John Alphonsus Duffy Papers

Baltimore Province of the Redemptorists Archives  
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Brooklyn, New York 11209-2807

The scope of the papers of Father John Alphonsus Duffy, C.Ss.R., a priest of the Baltimore Province of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, encompasses letters, notebooks, manuscripts, photographs, published works, and sound recordings dating until shortly after Duffy's death in 1993. The papers are housed in two cabinet drawers (55 A and B) and extend 3.13 linear feet. Father Duffy's personnel files are located in the alpha files, cabinet drawer 11 A but are not detailed in this finding aid.

The Duffy Papers are divided into several sections, as detailed below, though researchers are cautioned that there is overlap of material between and within sections, whether by duplication or adjunct subject matter. The collection is open to qualified researchers. The Duffy papers also contain unpublished manuscripts that are attributable to other authors. Researchers who intend to quote from these materials should seek the permission of the copyright holder—either the author or his or her estate.

### Biography:

John Alphonsus Duffy was born in Boston, May 28, 1914, to Irish immigrant parents, Patrick Duffy and Bridget Gannon Duffy. He was one of five children—twin, Leo, brothers, Michael and Thomas, and sister, Margaret. John was raised in the parish of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, the Mission Church, in Boston, MA, and graduated from Mission Grammar School. He then attended the Redemptorist seminaries of St. Mary's, North East, PA, and Mt. St. Alphonsus, Esopus, NY. He professed his vows as a Redemptorist on August 2, 1935, and was ordained a priest on June 23, 1940. After ordination he was sent for higher studies at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. He received his doctorate in Philosophy in 1944, having written a dissertation titled, *A Philosophy of Poetry Based on Thomistic Principles*.

The bulk of Father Duffy's ministerial life was spent teaching at Redemptorist seminaries in North East, PA, and in Suffield, CT. At St. Mary's in North East he was a professor of literature and composition and at St. Alphonsus College in Suffield he specialized in philosophy. He was a beloved professor who instilled his passion for poetry and language into many of his students. He was an active member of the Catholic Poetry Society of America and won their *Spirit* award in 1966. He was also an honorary Vice President of that society.

Father Duffy published four books of poetry: *Thou and I* (Boston: Bruce Humphries, Inc., 1947), *O Breathing Silence* (New York: Exposition Press, 1972), *Under the Goldwood Tree* (New York: Exposition Press, 1982), and *O Beata Trinitas* (privately published, 1988).

Apart from his many years spent teaching in Redemptorist seminaries (1944-1950 and 1951-1973 at North East, and 1976-1990 at Suffield), Father Duffy ministered in the Redemptorist communities of Brooklyn, NY (1950-51), Ephrata, PA (1973-74), Tobyhanna, PA (1974-1976), and Esopus, NY (1990-1993).

Father Duffy was retired at Mount St. Alphonsus Retreat Center in Esopus, NY, when he took sick with pneumonia and heart complications. He entered the hospital on Easter Sunday, 1993, and was on a respirator until he died on December 24, 1993. His funeral took place at his home

parish, the Basilica of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, in Boston. He is buried in the Redemptorist section of Mount Calvary Cemetery, Roslindale, MA.