



CELEBRATING 100 YEARS
OF CATHOLIC CHAPLAINCY AT YALE

Father James T. Healy '49

Chaplain 1960-1966

James T. Healy was born in 1927 in Hartford, CT. An English major and a resident of Jonathan Edwards College, Healy graduated from Yale in 1949. While at Yale, he was also a member of the varsity baseball team. Before his time at Yale, he served with the United States Army as a Japanese interpreter. After Yale, he spent one year of law school at the University of Connecticut (formerly Hartford College) before entering St. Thomas Seminary in Bloomfield, CT. He completed his studies for the priesthood at St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore, MD, and the Theological College of Catholic University in Washington, D.C. He was ordained in 1956. Before being appointed as Yale University's third Catholic Chaplain, he taught and counselled at Mount Saint Joseph's School in West Hartford, CT. He was thirty-three-years-old when he was appointed to the Yale Catholic chaplaincy position.

Fr. Healey's tenure was from 1960-1966. At the start of his chaplaincy, Saint Thomas More had recently added the Residency wing to the Chapel. Also designed by Douglas Orr, the Residency fundraising campaign was begun and finished by his predecessor, Fr. Edwin O'Brien '31. Fr. Healy's time as Yale's third Catholic Chaplain also ushered in the inaugural More House lecture in 1962. The lecture was delivered by Fr. John Courtney Murray, S.J., and his talk was entitled "On the Problem of God." Fr. Healy's tenure also saw the endowment and appointing of Yale's

T. Lawrason Riggs Chair in Roman Catholic Studies. Professor Stephen Kuttner, an expert in Canon Law, was the first Riggs Professor and held the position for five years. Yale was the first non-sectarian university with such an endowed chair.

Fr. Healy was very popular with students and was known for being approachable, empathetic and easy to speak with. After Mass and through Bible studies, students came to him with both daily concerns about being a student at Yale as well as with harder, more existential questions about the Church that the turbulent social changes in 1960s America brought into focus. He was often quoted in the *Yale Daily News* on the importance of ecumenism and why Catholicism was still an important part of a college education.

Fr. Healy left Yale in 1966 and was succeeded by his then Assistant Chaplain, Fr. Richard Russell. After Yale, James Healy pursued graduate work in psychotherapy and eventually left the priesthood. In 1986, he helped to found the Centre for Training in Psychotherapy in Toronto, Canada. CTP still operates today and offers its students a long-term part-time program in which they can work closely with faculty and develop the knowledge and skills necessary for the practice of psychotherapy. James Healy spent the rest of his life working at—and for—this organization that he helped to create. He died September 3, 2018.

Yale Daily News. September 23, 1960 “O'Brien Leaving Yale After 17-Year Stay; Will Become Pastor.” <https://ydnhistorical.library.yale.edu/?a=d&d=YDN19600923-01&e=-----196-en-20--1--txt-txIN--Catholic----1960-->