Overview of the Collection

Title: Papers of William H. Shannon
Creator: Msgr. William H. Shannon
Accession: 2013-9
Size: 39 boxes; 18.5 linear feet

Abstract: The personal and scholarly files of Msgr. William H. Shannon, professor of religious studies at Nazareth College of Rochester (1946-1982) and founding president of the International Thomas Merton Society. Included are articles, talks and presentations, homilies, research files, journals, and correspondence.

Biography of William H. Shannon

William H. Shannon was born December 6, 1917, in Rochester, N.Y. He grew up in St. Salome Parish in Irondequoit, N.Y., and was educated at the parish school, St. Andrew’s Seminary (Rochester), and St. Bernard’s Seminary (Rochester). He was ordained on June 5, 1943, by Bishop James E. Kearney at Sacred Heart Cathedral and was named a domestic prelate (monsignor) in 1966.

His sole parish assignment was as assistant pastor at Sacred Heart Cathedral from 1943 to 1945. When he was appointed professor of religion at Nazareth College of Rochester in 1946, he began an association with Nazareth and the Sisters of St. Joseph that continued for the rest of his life.

Msgr. Shannon earned a master’s degree in history from Canisius College in 1949 and a doctorate in history from the University of Ottawa in 1953, and he completed post-doctoral work at McMaster University. He was named full professor at Nazareth in 1958 and was honored as professor emeritus upon his retirement in 1982.

While a faculty member and chair of the college’s Department of Religion, he became a widely known and respected teacher of theology, Scripture, and Church history. Committed to the spirit and reforms of the Second Vatican Council, he wrote often about Biblical and liturgical renewals, authority in the Church, and interreligious dialogue. He served as chaplain of the college from 1949 to 1975, and as chaplain to the Sisters of St. Joseph from 1980 until his death in 2012.

In the 1970s Msgr. Shannon developed a deep interest in the writing of Thomas Merton. His research and contacts with other Merton scholars led him to play a key role in organizing the International Thomas Merton Society (for which he served as founding president), and his extensive writing on the Cistercian monk’s life and works established him as one of the world’s foremost authorities on Merton. He authored and edited many books and articles including several volumes of Merton’s letters and essays, The Thomas Merton Encyclopedia, and Silent Lamp, an acclaimed biography. He also wrote extensively on a range of topics including spirituality, non-violence, moral issues, liturgy, Scripture, and prayer.

After his retirement, Msgr. Shannon continued lecturing and attending conferences worldwide. His correspondence suggests the many associations he developed during his long and prolific career. His distinctions include an endowed chair in Catholic studies and a lecture series at Nazareth College, both of which bear his name. He received honorary degrees from Nazareth College, St. Bernard’s Institute of Theology and Ministry, and St. Bonaventure University.

In addition to his scholarship, Msgr. Shannon will be remembered for the spiritual guidance he offered to many, his commitment to non-violence, the depth and insight of his homilies, and his perspective on faith.
Scope and Contents

The papers of William H. Shannon cover the many areas of interest of his professional life, including Scripture, liturgy, the Papacy and authority in the Roman Catholic Church, the Second Vatican Council, non-violence and peace, spirituality, and moral issues such as end-of-life decisions. The progression of Msgr. Shannon’s thought and teaching on these topics can be traced in his published articles, presentations, and homilies. While some material in the collection is from 1940 to 1960, the bulk dates from the 1970s to 2012.

Of particular interest are his files on Thomas Merton which include articles, talks, and correspondence with Merton scholars around the world. Widely recognized as one of the foremost authorities on Merton, Msgr. Shannon wrote prolifically about the Cistercian monk’s life and works, forming many associations with other followers of Merton and, in some cases, with those who knew him.

Also of interest are his homilies, the majority given in his role as chaplain to the Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester (1980-2012). Included are a complete set of his liturgical year homilies (1980-1981 through 2011-2012); homilies for feast days, secular holidays, and special events; and funeral homilies for Sisters of St. Joseph (some of which have been published in Cloud of Witnesses: Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester Remembered, 2006 and 2008).

Organization

Series 1: Personal, Biographical (1943 - 2012)
8 boxes

Series 2: Papers, Talks (bulk 1970s - 2012)
5 boxes

Series 3: Research Files (1980s - 2010)
6 boxes

Series 4: Thomas Merton (1960s - 2012)
9 boxes

Series 5: Published Work of William H. Shannon (1952 - 2012)
3 cartons
Works on Merton are included in Series 4.

Series 6: Homilies (bulk 1980 - 2012)
4 cartons

Series 7: Books (1954 - 2012)
4 boxes

Administrative Information

Access: This collection is open under the rules and regulations of the Archives of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester.

Preferred Citation: Item, folder, box, Papers of William H. Shannon, Archives of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester, NY.

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Detailed Description of the Collection

SERIES 1: PERSONAL, BIOGRAPHICAL

Box 37-1-1 Personal
1. Photographs
2. Honorary degrees
3. Prayer books
4. VHS tape and DVD: First Mass at St. Salome Church (1943)
5. VHS tape: Presentation on St. Paul (2009)
8. DVD: Presentation on Vatican II (n. d.)

Box 37-1-2 Notebooks, Journals
3. Notes on reading Merton’s journals: 1988
4. Notes on contemplative prayer and Merton (n.d.)
5. “Notes on the Sacraments,” 1950

Box 37-1-3 Thesis, Dissertation

Box 37-1-4 “A Celebration by His Friends,” 1997 (Tribute to Bill Shannon on his 80th birthday)

Box 37-2-1 Personal: Biographical
1. Curriculum vitae
2. Personal information
3. Professional information
4. Tributes, celebrations
5. Memoir material
6. Miscellaneous (“Musings”)
7. Genealogy
8. Diocese of Rochester: Presbyteral Council
9. Priests Association of Rochester
10. Funeral
12. Notes, cards received during last illness
13. Notebook with messages written to WHS during his last illness
14. Sympathy cards
15. Zuber Road property

Box 37-2-2 Personal: Correspondence
1. Master list of letters
2. Former students
3. Religious
4. Brennan, Sr. Margaret
5. Clark, Bishop Matthew H.
6. Curran, Rev. Charles
7. Hickey, Archbishop James (regarding Curran)
8. Ratzinger, Cardinal Joseph (regarding Curran)
9. Correspondence regarding publishing and reviews, 1981-1999
10. Correspondence regarding publishing and reviews, 2000-2012
Box 37-2-3  Personal: Correspondence
1. 1981-1986
2. 1987-1988
5. 1990
6. 1991
7. 1992
8. 1993-1994
9. 1995-1996
12. SSJ Brazil mission
13. Tanzanian Sisters

Box 37-2-4  Personal: Correspondence, Interviews
1. Dissent / Dialogue in the Church
2. Church, Papacy, Vatican II
3. Church, Papacy, Vatican II
4. Death, hospice, end-of-life issues
5. Liturgy
6. Moral issues
7. Nazareth College
8. Prayer
9. Scripture
10. Theology / Spirituality
11. Theology / Spirituality
12. War, peace, non-violence
13. Women in the Church
14. Interviews
15. Christmas

SERIES 2: PAPERS, TALKS

Box 37-2-5  Papers, Talks: Church, Papacy, Vatican II
1. “Authority and Leadership in the Church” (1997)
2. “Authority in the Church” (2002)
4. “Authority in the Church, or Whose Church Is It Anyway?” (2006)
5. Clark, Bishop Matthew: “The Pastoral Exercise of Authority”
   “Catechism of the Catholic Church” (1994)
8. “Catholicism and Interreligious Dialogue” (notes, 2007)
   “The Unity of All Christians: Is It Possible?” (2007)
12. “Toward a Democratic Church” (1992)
   “The Mystical Element in the Church (1992)
   “Lay Ministry” (1993)
   “The Church as Mystical Communion” (2010)
   “Role of the Laity in the Ministry and Teaching of the Church” (n. d.)
   “Public Opinion in the Church” (n. d.)
16. “Church of Fear or Church of Freedom?” (2009)
17. “The Ecumenical Movement” (notes, 2007)

Box 37-2-6 Papers, Talks: Church, Papacy, Vatican II
1. “The Church and Dissent” (1986)
   “The Bishop of Rome in History” (n. d.)
   “The Primacy of Peter” (n. d.)
   “A History of the Papacy” (2005)
3. “Seven Shifts in the Church” (2005)
   “Vatican II: Overview” (2009)
   “Vatican Council 40 Years Later” (2005)
   “The Church and the World” (n. d.)
   “Reception of Vatican II” (1997)
4. “Pius IX and Vatican I” (2005)
7. “Role of the Papacy, or Do We Need the Pope?” (2010)
   “On the Experience of Church” (2006)
   “The Man Who Was Knox” (1961)

Box 37-2-7 Papers, Talks: Death, Hospice, End-of-life; Liturgy; Moral Issues; Scripture
3. “Here on the Way to There” (Talk at St. Ann’s Home, 2005)
4. “Growth through Diminishment” (1978)
   “Invocation at St. Joseph Convent Infirmary” (1996)
5. “Easter as Sacrament” (2005)
   “The Liturgical Season of Lent-Easter-Pentecost” (n. d.)
   “The Paschal Feasts” (n. d.)
   “Eucharistic Crisis” (n. d.)
   “The Meaning of Liturgy” (1992)
   “Liturgy: Celebration of the Christian Mystery” (2011)
    “Christian Conscience” (2011)
   “Homosexuality and the Bible” (n. d.)
   “Theological Stance on Sexuality and Marriage” (n. d.)
   2003 Vita Award Program
13. “To the Board of St. Joseph’s Hospital” (Elmira, NY, ca. 1989)
   (Catholic Church teaching on sterilization)
   “Notes on the Passion Narrative in the Gospels” (2005)
23. “A Retreat with King David: Praying the Psalms” (n. d.)

**Box 37-2-8 Papers, Talks: Theology, Spirituality**
2. “The Best of What We Believe: An Essential Catechism” (n. d.)
3. “A Century of Theology” (1968)
7. “Jerusalem and Athens” (1982 Commencement Address, St. Bernard’s Institute)
8. “Contemplation and Technology” (n. d.)
11. “The Quest for the Historical Jesus” (n. d.)
   “What Do We Really Know About Jesus?” (2004)
   “Jesus the One Mediator between God and Us” (2004)
   “Introduction to Retreat” (n. d.)
18. “Resurrection” (1964)
22. Lectures given to the Sisters of St. Joseph (ca. 1984)
26. “Where is God?” (Talk at St. Louis Church, Pittsford, n. d.)
27. “An Age of Seekers” (1994)
30. “Conversion Experiences” (n. d.)
Box 37-3-1  
Papers, Talks: Theology, Spirituality; War, Peace, Non-Violence; Shannon Chair in Catholic Studies; Women in the Church, Women Religious
1. “The Priestly Ministry” (ca. 1971)  
   “Spirituality of the Diocesan Priest” (1998)
   “Peace in the World” (1983)
   “Just War and Non-Violence” (1985)
   “Merton’s 70th Birthday and the Task of Peace” (1985)
   “Non-Violence” (1992)
   “Way of Non-Violence” (1992)
   “Afghanistan, War, and Non-Violence” (2002)
   “Peace and Human Solidarity” (2003)
   “Principles That Underlie Non-Violence” (n. d.)
   “Is Non-Violence a Viable Alternative?” (n. d.)
   “The Theory of the Just War” (n. d.)
   “The Non-Violent Alternative” (n. d.)
   “Principles and Tactics of Non-Violence” (n. d.)
10. Seminar on Non-Violence (Nazareth College, 1985)
11. “My Long Road to a Global Ethic” (2004 Shannon Chair lecture by Hans Kung)
12. Shannon Chair in Catholic Studies event flyers
   “The Church and the Ordination of Women” (2010)
   “Papal Documents on the Ordination of Women” (n. d.)

SERIES 3: RESEARCH FILES

Box 37-3-2  Research: Church, Papacy, Vatican II
1. Christians and Jews in Dialogue
2. Church Documents / Church Identity
3. Curran Case (newspaper articles, 1986)
4. Ecumenical Movement
5. Interreligious Dialogue
6. Church Reform
7. Vatican II
8. Lectio Divina
9. Catholic Social Teaching

Box 37-3-3  Research: Death, Hospice, End-of-Life Issues; Moral Issues; Liturgy
1. Cremation
2. Grief and Loss
3. Poems about Death
4. End-of-Life Issues
5. Hospice Movement
7. St. Joseph’s Hospice, London
8. Living Will, Advance Care Planning
9. Preparing for Death
10. Terri Shiavo Case
11. Conscientious Voting
12. Homosexuality
13. NCCB Committee on the Liturgy: Newsletters, 1990-1996
15. USCCB Committee on Divine Worship: Newsletters, 2008-2012
16. Liturgy Resources

Box 37-3-4  **Research: St. Paul**
1. St. Paul: General
2. St. Paul: General
3. Year of St. Paul
4. New Perspective on St. Paul
5. Conversion of St. Paul
7. Paul’s Three Journeys
8. Paul’s Companions
9. Women in Paul’s Ministry
10. Biblical Places
11. St. Paul in Art

Box 37-3-5  **Research: Scripture; Theology, Spirituality**
2. The Psalms
3. The Gospels / New Testament
4. Introduction to World Religions (course outline, n. d.)
5. Buddhism
6. Science and Religion
7. Schneiders, Sr. Sandra

Box 37-3-6  **Research: War, Peace, Non-Violence**
1. Non-Violence
2. United States Institute of Peace
3. Pope John XXIII and the Cuban Missile Crisis
4. Persian Gulf War
5. Iraq War
6. Middle East History
7. Military Recruitment
8. Bishops’ Pastoral on War and Peace

Box 37-3-7  **Research: Women in the Church, Women Religious**
1. NCCB, “A Pastoral Response to Women’s Concerns for Church and Society” (Draft of May 1987)
2. NCCB, “A Pastoral Response to Women’s Concerns for Church and Society” (Draft of October 1987)
3. NCCB, “A Pastoral Response to Women’s Concerns for Church and Society” (Draft of January 1988)
4. NCCB, “A Pastoral Response to Women’s Concerns for Church and Society” (Draft of March 1988)
5. NCCB, “Called to Be One in Jesus Christ” (ca. 1992)
6. Women and Ordination
7. Women and Ordination: “Ordinatio Sacerdotalis”
SERIES 4: THOMAS MERTON

Box 37-3-8  Merton: Reviews

Reviews of Shannon’s Work
2. Silent Lamp (1992)

Reviews by Shannon
10. The Seven Mountains / Follow the Ecstasy (1984)
11. The Seven Mountains of Thomas Merton (1985)
18. Thomas Merton as Writer and Monk (1991)
22. No Man is an Island (1995)
23. Run to the Mountain (1996)

Box 37-4-1  Merton: Published Articles

15. “New Horizons for an Old Journey” (review of “No Man is an Island,” 1995)
17. “Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton: Correspondence on Peace” (1996)
   “The Year of the Cold War Letters” (1988)
26. Various articles:
   - Preface to *The Road to Joy* (1989)
   - Preface to *The School of Charity* (1990)
   - “Original Blessing: The Gift of the True Self” (1990)
   - “A Note to the Reader,” *Seven Storey Mountain* (1998 edition)
   - “Unusual Discovery in a Second-Hand Bookstore in England” (1992)

**Box 37-4-2**

**Merton: Papers, Talks**
2. “Contemplation in a World of Action” (1985)
8. “52nd Anniversary of Merton’s Entrance into the Monastery” (ca. 1993)
10. “Where is the Wisdom We Have Lost in Knowledge?” (1995)
   “Merton and the Task of Peace” (n. d.)
16. “Return to World” (n. d.)
17. “Merton’s Involvement in the Peace Movement: Beginnings” (n. d.)
18. “Merton’s Abbots” (n. d.)
19. “Merton and Spirituality” (n. d.)

**Box 37-4-3**

**Merton: Correspondence**
1. Undated
2. 1980-1983
3. 1984-1985
4. 1986-1987
5. 1988
6. 1989
7. 1990
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9. 1992
10. 1993

**Box 37-4-4**

**Merton: Correspondence**
1. 1994-1996
2. 1997-1999
4. Allchin, Canon A. M.
5. Aziz, Abdul
6. Cooper, David
9. Dinter, Rev. Paul
10. Douglass, James
11. Ferry, W. H. (Ping)

Box 37-4-5  Merton: Correspondence
1. Forest, James and Nancy
2. Giroux, Robert
3. Goss-Mayr, Hildegard, and Goss, Jean
4. Grayston, Donald
5. Griffin, John Howard
6. Gullick, Etta
9. Hebblethwaite, Peter
10. Laughlin, James
11. Lentfoehr, Sister Therese
12. Lim, Sister Aimee

Box 37-4-6  Merton: Correspondence
1. McCormick, Anne
2. Mott, Michael
5. Orsini, Jane
6. Plank, Karl
7. Rosenthal, Peggy, and Dardess, George
8. Rush, Molly
9. Stanley, John
10. Steindl-Rast, Brother David
11. Stone, Naomi Burton
12. Stoodley, Barbara Cliff
14. Sister M. Cecile (Kitchener, Ont.)
15. Sister Therese Mary, SSND (Japan)

Box 37-4-7  Merton: Resources
2. Allchin: Various articles, lectures, sermons
6. Daggy, "A Man of the Whole Hemisphere" (n. d.)
7. Laughlin, James: Biographical information
11. Mason, “Massignon and Merton” (n. d.)
15. Thurston, “Epiphany and Eden” (n. d.)
Box 37-4-8 **Merton: Resources**
1. International Thomas Merton Society
2. Merton Pax Christi Society
3. Russian Thomas Merton Society
4. Events
5. Marketing material, flyers
8. *The Inner Experience*: Rev. Daniel C. Walsh (correspondence)
14. Stewart, Bruce, “Me and My Shadow” (play script, n. d.)
15. Ritz, Joseph P., “Trappists” (play script, 1993)
19. Transcription of the Meeting of the Merton Advisory Board (regarding Merton television documentary, 1983)
20. Songs (Merton’s words set to music)
21. Hagia Sophia

**SERIES 5: PUBLISHED WORK OF WILLIAM H. SHANNON**

Box 37-5-1 **Articles by William H. Shannon**
1. “The Council, the Liturgy and Christian Formation” (1965)
2. “Christian Conscience” (1967)
4. “Perspective on Sin” (1977)
5. “Word Out of Silence” (1977)
7. “Contemplation and the Sacraments” (1978)

Box 37-5-2 **Articles by William H. Shannon**
   - “Finding God’s Kingdom
   - “Can We Love Our Enemies?”
   - “Winning, Losing for Jesus”
   - “How to Really Forgive”
15. “Communion of Saints: Key to the Eucharist” (2005)
17. “Seven Shifts in the Church” (2005)
19. Reviews by William H. Shannon:
   - Letters to Contemplatives (1991)
   - Gandhi on Christianity (ca. 1991)
   - What Are Theologians Saying Now? (ca. 1992)
   - Bringing Christ into Your Home (ca. 1992)
   - Prayer: Finding the Heart’s True Home (ca. 1992)
   - Four Cultures of the West (2005)

Box 37-5-3  Publications, Texts
1. The Church of Christ: The Church as an Organization (second edition, 1952)
4. The Veils and the Face: An Approach to Christian Prayer (ch. 5-7, 1986)
11. How to Become a Christian Even If You Already Are One (2012)
12. Royalties

SERIES 6: HOMILIES

1. Liturgical Year 1980-1981
2. Liturgical Year 1981-1982
3. Liturgical Year 1982-1983
4. Liturgical Year 1983-1984
5. Liturgical Year 1984-1985
7. Liturgical Year 1986-1987
10. Liturgical Year 1989-1990
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Box 37-5-5  Homilies: Liturgical Years 2000-2001 through 2011-2012
1. Liturgical Year 2000-2001
2. Liturgical Year 2001-2002
3. Liturgical Year 2002-2003
4. Liturgical Year 2003-2004
5. Liturgical Year 2004-2005
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8. Liturgical Year 2007-2008
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11. Liturgical Year 2010-2011
12. Liturgical Year 2011-2012

Box 37-5-6  Homilies: Liturgical Year, Feast Days, Secular Holidays
1. Advent
2. Advent Service of Reconciliation
3. Ash Wednesday
4. Lent
5. Lenten Service of Reconciliation
6. Feast of the Transfiguration
7. Feast of the Ascension
8. Feast of the Sacred Heart
9. All Saints Day
10. All Souls Day
11. Immaculate Conception
12. Birth of Mary
13. Annunciation
14. Visitation
15. Assumption
16. Our Lady of Mt. Carmel
17. St. Joseph
18. St. John Fisher
19. SS. Peter and Paul
20. St. Theresa of the Child Jesus
21. Memorial Day
22. Fourth of July
23. Labor Day
24. Thanksgiving
25. Other Topics: Purgatory; Remembering

Box 37-5-7  Homilies: Events
1. Congregational Jubilees: Sisters of St. Joseph
2. Jubilees: Individual Sisters
3. Jubilees: Groups of Sisters
4. Anniversaries of Ordination: Shannon, Other Priests
5. Weddings, Anniversaries
6. Other Events
7. Funerals: B-C
8. Funerals: D-F
9. Funerals: G-H
10. Funerals: K-L
11. Funerals: M
12. Funerals: N-S
13. Funerals: T-W

SERIES 7: BOOKS

Box 38-1 Books by William H. Shannon
1. Outlines of Sacred Theology (1954)
2. The Church of Christ (1959)
6. Silencio en Llamas (Spanish translation of Silence on Fire)
7. Korean translation of Silence on Fire

Box 38-1 Books about Thomas Merton written/edited by William H. Shannon
2. The Hidden Ground of Love: The Letters of Thomas Merton (1985)
7. Korean translation of Something of a Rebel

Box 38-1 Books about Thomas Merton by Shannon and Others

Box 38-1 Shannon / Merton Resources
2. Burton, Index to the Published Letters of Thomas Merton (1996)