

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY  
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Ursuline High School Project

Ursuline Experiences

O. H. 6

BISHOP JAMES W. MALONE

Interviewed

by

Donna DeBlasio

on

December 3, 1974

## BISHOP JAMES W. MALONE

The third bishop of the Diocese of Youngstown, Bishop James W. Malone, was born in Youngstown on March 8, 1920, the son of James and Katherine Malone. He was educated in the parochial grade schools of Youngstown and attended Ursuline High School from 1933 to 1937, where he was an honor student. He then went on to St. Charles College in Baltimore, Maryland and received a degree in Theology from St. Mary's Seminary in Cleveland. He later attended the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. and was awarded a Master of Arts in Education in 1952 and a Ph.D. in 1957.

Bishop Malone was ordained a priest in 1945 and from 1945 to 1950, was an assistant priest at St. Columba Cathedral. From 1950 to 1954, he taught at St. John's College in Cleveland and also at the Catholic University of America. In 1954 he was named superintendent of the six county Diocese of Youngstown Schools, and he served in that capacity until 1960 when he was appointed Auxiliary Bishop of the diocese. Following the death of Bishop Emmett Walsh in 1965, he was appointed Bishop of the diocese of Youngstown.

His Excellency has received honorary degrees from Walsh College in Canton, Ohio, Youngstown State University and the University of Vermont. He is the past president and a General Board Member of the Ohio Council of Churches.

Donna M. DeBlasio

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INTERVIEWEE: BISHOP JAMES W. MALONE

INTERVIEWER: Donna DeBlasio

SUBJECT: Ursuline Experiences

DATE: December 3, 1974

D: This is an interview with Bishop James W. Malone for the Youngstown State University Ursuline High School Oral History Project, by Donna DeBlasio, at the Chancery Office of the Diocese of Youngstown, on December 3, 1974, at 1:15 p.m.

D: Bishop Malone, could you tell us a little about your background and your family?

M: I'd be very glad to. I was born in Youngstown, Ohio, in 1920. I attended parochial schools here in Youngstown, including Ursuline High School, which is the subject of this interview.

D: What about beyond Ursuline?

M: Following graduation from Ursuline High School, I was a student at St. Charles College, a liberal arts college in Baltimore, Maryland. Subsequently, I received a degree in theology for the Roman Catholic priesthood at St. Mary's Seminary in Cleveland. In the 1950's, I received a Master's Degree in Education at Catholic University of America. In 1957, I received a Ph.D. degree from Catholic University of America, in Washington, D.C.

D: What did you do after you graduated from college?

M: As regards to my activities, my aim in going to college and to the seminary was to prepare to be

ordained a Roman Catholic priest. I was ordained for the Catholic priesthood in 1945. For five years, from 1945 to 1950, I served as the assistant priest at St. Columba Cathedral, at Wood and Elm Streets in Youngstown. For the next two years, from 1950 to 1952, I was in graduate studies in Washington. Beginning in 1952, I taught college for a year and a half at St. John's College in Cleveland and also at Catholic University of America for several summer sessions.

In 1954, I became Superintendent of Schools of the Diocese of Youngstown and served in that capacity until 1960. I was the superintendent of the Catholic school organization in the six counties that comprise the Diocese of Youngstown. During the time I was superintendent, my responsibility was to supervise the organization that provided schooling for some forty thousand parochial school students. Following that experience, in 1960, I was named the Auxiliary Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Youngstown and served in that capacity for five years. In 1965, I was appointed Bishop in charge of the Catholic Diocese and have continued in that position until the present time.

- D: When you went to Ursuline, how big would you say the school was?
- M: I entered Ursuline High School in September, 1933. The enrollment of Ursuline totaled two hundred and seventy-five students in grades nine through twelve.
- D: Could you describe the building?
- M: The building that I attended still stands. It's part of the enlarged Ursuline High School. It was a three-story structure, built in 1924. On the first floor there were labs to the left and a cafeteria to the right. And on the second and third floors were classrooms. There was also a combination gym and auditorium attached to the building.
- D: From where did most of the students at Ursuline come, as far as geographical location and social class?
- M: Geographically, at that time, virtually all the students came from within the corporate limits of the city of Youngstown. As regards the

social-economic grouping, they represented the Catholic population of the city, mostly children of families of men who worked in the steel mills. It was an exception, rather than a rule, that the parents of the students would be from a professional or a family-owned business.

D: How much did it cost to go to Ursuline?

M: The tuition from 1933 to 1937 was five dollars per month, a total of fifty dollars per year.

D: Did they have to buy their books or did they rent them?

M: In those years, the books were bought by the students, but they were usually purchased as second-hand books from the students who had used them the year before.

D: Was there any way for a student who wanted to go to Ursuline but couldn't pay for it to work his way through?

M: Yes, during those years from 1933 to 1937, there was a federally financed program to help young people earn money while they went to school. That program operated at Ursuline High School. A student would perform certain tasks about the school and he was paid per hour for his services. That was a long time ago, but my recollection is that we were paid perhaps fifty cents per hour for the work that we did about the school.

D: Did you, yourself, have to work at Ursuline?

M: I did not work at Ursuline.

D: How strict was the discipline?

M: Discipline, as a word, has many shades of meanings to me. It seems to me that the best way to describe the spirit of the school at that time was that the student body was so small that there were no problems of pupil control as we usually think about it nowadays when we have larger school enrollments. The best discipline, I think, was maintained by good teachers within the classroom. The discipline

outside the classroom was largely administered by the elderly priest, who was the principal of the high school.

The discipline, in terms of helping students to conform to the rules, was promoted chiefly by the example and the encouragement of the older members of the school population. In those days, seniors of the school for example, had a keen sense of responsibility and they helped the newcomers to the school understand the ideals of the school and the way in which the student was to conduct himself.

D: Were there many breaches of conduct?

M: Again, it's been a long time ago, but my recollection of one of the very serious breaches of discipline--considered serious in those days--was smoking on school grounds. This was a very serious infraction of the rules.

A second regulation was that students were not permitted to leave the school property at the lunch hour. Those intrepid souls that went off the property and went down to the neighborhood grocery store to get something for their lunch were reprimanded severely for breaking the rule about leaving school property.

The rules were few and for the most part, they were observed.

D: What type of punishments were there for those who happened to break the rules?

M: There was a special study hall that convened at 3:15 p.m., dismissal time, and continued for an hour. That was one form of discipline that I recall the most vividly.

D: Was there a dress code?

M: Not in the sense that students were obliged to wear the same kind of clothing, for example, a uniform. I don't even recall that there was a regulation saying that we had to wear neckties or jackets, but in the days of the 1930's, there was more of an awareness that, when one went to school, he dressed more formally than when he was at home. So there was a certain formality about the way we dressed.

I suppose it would be fair to say that we dressed as well as we possibly could because that was what was expected of a student in those days. A student was to get a shirt that buttoned to the neck. The boys wore neckties, sweaters, and slacks. I recall in the winter months we wore overshoes that were known as galoshes and they linked up at the top. Recently I had an occasion to see the 1937 annual of Ursuline High School. I saw that the girls of that period dressed in skirts that came down to the calf and wore felt hats pulled down rakishly over one eye. That was my own recollection of the dress code.

D: Would you describe a typical day?

M: A school day began at 8:30 a.m. and concluded at 3:15 p.m. The academic schedule had limited offerings so that the number of electives open to one was limited. In the ninth and tenth grades, there were one or two electives.

Every day included courses in English, history, math, always Religion class, and usually language, either Latin or a modern language.

The day was marked by a great deal of friendliness. Because the student enrollment was under three hundred in the entire school, everyone knew everyone else. There was a familial spirit throughout the building.

The extracurricular activities were, again, limited to varsity sports. Clubs were organized around certain studies, for example, the French Club, the Latin Club, the Public Speech Club. We had a much simpler curriculum than what is offered today in the typical high school.

D: What classes did you enjoy the most?

M: I suppose the classes that I enjoyed the most were the ones in English literature, principally because the teacher in those classes was a very able and gifted Ursuline nun who taught well and gave me, at least, an appreciation of what she taught because of her love for it.

D: Were the classes coed?

- M: Yes, the classes were conducted as co-educational classes, but now I recollect that we were organized into homerooms separately. There was a boys' homeroom and a girls' homeroom at each class level. To the best of my recollection, however, all of the classes were conducted in a co-educational fashion.
- D: In the athletics, who were Ursuline's greatest rivals at the time?
- M: In 1933, the greatest rival of Ursuline was Rayen High School on the North Side. Both schools were located rather close together. Many of the students attending Ursuline came from the North Side of the city so there was a keen rivalry between the two schools. I recall that the rivalry was a very uneven one because Ursuline was a younger and smaller school than Rayen. And I can remember well the first football game that I witnessed in 1933 between Rayen and Ursuline. The game ended with Rayen winning 33-0.
- D: Do you think there was a great deal of support for athletics among the students and the faculty?
- M: In those days there was a great deal of interest in athletics, particularly in varsity football and in varsity basketball, because this was one of the few activities at the school that went beyond the classroom studies. I recall in 1935, Ursuline High School had a winning basketball team. Ursuline placed among the top two or three teams at a Chicago meet. There was great pride and interest in that 1935 basketball team.
- D: Were newcomers resented by the students who were there or were they welcomed by the student body?
- M: In 1933, when I entered Ursuline High School, I found that I was warmly welcomed. I emphasize again that the school was small and because it was small, everyone knew each other. Newcomers, as they arrived, were made to feel part of the school and for the most part, were integrated into the daily routine without any incidents whatsoever. I don't recall any hazing or initiation or any of those steps that used to take place by the students.
- D: Were there any gathering places for the students when they weren't in class?



M: No. Characteristic of the times was the fact that when we wanted to gather, we gathered in one of three places.

One was outside of the east entrance of the school. On the coldest day in winter, we would gather, as a group, outside there to chat and visit after our lunch.

In better weather, a second location was under some large trees at the far end of the Wick estate. They were at the corner of Wick and Madison Avenues. That was a favorite gathering place.

The third place where we would gather was after school, downtown in front of Strouss' store. This third gathering place was the favorite among the students, but not the favorite of the faculty. It was considered that when you gathered in front of Strouss' store in large numbers, you seemed to be idle and lacking in industry. The faculty's idea was that after school, you should go home on buses, the city buses, and go to your homes and not stop downtown. Nonetheless, we did.

D: What were some of the major topics of conversation of the students?

M: I suppose among the boys, the favorite topic was the girls, and among the girls, the favorite topic was boys. Beyond that, we discussed jobs because we were in high school at a period when economic times were not good. Certainly among the boys, a great problem discussed was a life's employment. A great deal of time was spent speculating about the future, how we were going to make a living. Certainly a big part of our time was spent discussing sports, not just sports at Ursuline High School, but the Cleveland Indians, the Cleveland baseball club. These, I'd say were the principal topics that we discussed.

D: What type of effect did the depression have on Ursuline?

M: Well, the depression was well under way by the time I entered Ursuline High School in 1933. Certainly by 1931, here in the valley, the economic depression was a reality. Steel mills, the principal employers of families concentrated here in the valley, were

producing very little steel and were working some of the plants only four days per month. Many men were out of work and were employed by federal projects that began about 1933, for example, the Works Progress Administration, the WPA. I guess with that background of unemployment and economic uncertainty, the students in high schools were obviously affected. It affected us in that we were conscious of the lack of money. We were, as a group, I think, very careful of the clothing that we wore. We were very appreciative of special times of the year, for example, the family celebrations of Thanksgiving and Christmas. There was special food like turkey which was relatively a big event in the lives of most of us.

The depression also affected us in that we had much less money to spend socially. As a result, we did not attend as many events as students in the later days may have done. For example, to attend a basketball game was an event of the week. You did not spend as much money beyond the little bit to go to the game and then come home. There was a very limited amount of money available. I'd say that the depression of the 1930s affected us in that we had less money to spend and found greater joy in simpler things as a result of it.

D: How did the school handle the depression?

M: Well, as a student, I was largely unacquainted with that. I presume that there were many responsibilities that the Ursuline Sisters as a group had to face relative to the operation of the school. I'm certain that the parents of the students had many responsibilities to face regarding how they were going to spend the little money they had for tuition for school. I must say that I, personally, was largely unaware of the problem of financing the school and operating the school.

D: Who were some of your outstanding teachers at Ursuline?

M: Certainly an outstanding teacher to me was Sister Winifred Melody. She was the teacher of English.

Other teachers whom I remember fondly and recognize now as very dedicated and effective teachers include other Ursuline sisters, Mother Paul, who was a

teacher of Latin, Sister Mary Angela who taught Latin, Sister Damian who taught history, and Sister Regina who taught Chemistry. These Ursuline sisters stand out in my recollection as outstanding women. I also remember Sister Julianna Barrett, who taught French very effectively.

The priest who was principal of the school at that time was Father Edward Conry. He was a very inspirational and kindly person. I remember him as being a very important person in the lives of the students.

D: What type of methods did the teachers use in class?

M: Well, depending upon the class, my personal recollection is that they were very well organized in their approach. For example, in mathematics class, Sister Blanche Klempay presented her material very crisply at the beginning of the class and then quickly went through the class asking for responses. I recall that Sister Margaret Fitzgerald who taught American History would lecture extensively in the class, but then she'd have time for discussion at the end of class. She would be glad to listen to the students and give information about the topic. The method varied according to class, but the principal recollection I have is that these people organized their material well and because they organized it so well, I think they should be complimented.

D: Do you think there was a fear of the teachers?

M: I'm not so sure it was a fear of the teachers as much as it was a fear of parents, who would be in contact with other teachers about the things that would go on in school. At Ursuline High School, there was a very close contact between the teacher and the parent. In those unusual circumstances where something didn't go well, the teacher talked to the parent of the student. The parent quickly brought the student to line. I don't think it was any fear of the teachers so much as it was a different climate of relationship between teacher and parent themselves.

D: What type of relationship was there between the faculty member and the student?

M: A good one, I think. There was a more formalized relationship that the one we recognize today;

there was a basic trust. Speaking academically, there was an awareness on the part of the student that the teacher was always willing to give extra time, both in class for explanations and outside of class for extra help. I think it was the good awareness on the part of the student that the teacher was interested in him as a person. I know that the general impression that I had as a student, was that the teacher cared about the students.

D: Were there a great number of cliques at Ursuline?

M: About the only clique that I recall was a large group of students from the North Side of the city. They had been friends before they arrived at Ursuline and they continued to be good friends during their high school years.

Some of us who lived in other parts of the city found that the strong pressure of the North Siders was a factor. But I must say, at the same time, that the North Siders were always so open in making new friends that whatever problem there was in that regard was not a significant one.

D: Who were some of your close friends at Ursuline?

M: Some of my closest friends, those of whom are still living, are William Hughes, William Joyce, and Francis Hopkins. Another close friend was Scotty Wynn. These could be counted on together with Raymond Sturgeon. These four were probably the ones who come to mind as closest friends.

D: Who were some of your other classmates whom are notable and whom we would know?

M: Well, these gentlemen whom I just mentioned are very notable. Mr. Raymond Sturgeon is the very successful grocer on the North Side of Youngstown. He and his wife are the parents of three sets of twins; he has a total of about twelve children.

Scotty Wynn is employed by Commercial Shearing and lives in Hubbard. He is a successful family man.

William Joyce has a Buick dealership in Mansfield, Ohio. He and his wife are the parents of four children.

Mr. Francis Hopkins is a sales representative for an aluminum manufacturing company and he lives in Cleveland. He and his wife are the parents of five children.

All of these friends of mine have made important contributions to my life.

- D: How many hours per night did you put in with your study?
- M: Probably an hour and a half was the minimum, sometimes more, but I'd say an hour and a half is enough.
- D: Did you find your studies difficult?
- M: Personally, I did not find the studies difficult, because the studies were interesting to me and also because I did not have difficulty with the courses. In those days, the big challenge was to get five "As" on your report card in the area of four subjects plus the subject of religion. I recall that I was very often on the honor roll.
- D: Do you think that Ursuline prepared you for college training?
- M: Yes, Ursuline prepared me very well for college work and the subsequent work that I had chosen. Ursuline High School, in the 1930's, billed itself as a college preparatory school.
- D: Do you think that Ursuline had an influence on you to a religious vocation?
- M: Very probably, although I think the principal influence came from my family. One, of course, believes as a Roman Catholic, that the call to serve as a priest was given to me by God. The influences that prompted that [decision] are primarily my family, my parents, and also, I feel a very strong support of influence were the people who were my associates at Ursuline High School.
- D: When you graduated, what kind of feeling did you have about leaving Ursuline?
- M: I had mixed feelings, of course. Like all seniors, I began to think a lot better of the school in my senior year than I ever did when I was a sophomore.

I began to forget some of the unpleasant things that had happened during the four years like the teaching, the repetition, the classes that sometimes were not as interesting as I thought they could have been. But upon graduation, some of those disadvantages began to fade and I began to think about the wonderful things that happened throughout my stay at Ursuline.

At the same time, I had a great expectation at the beginning of adult life. While I enjoyed Ursuline High School, I understood very clearly that it was a step along the way. I left Ursuline with a thankfulness for the experience of being an Ursuline student.

- D: Do you think there was a feeling of pride in going to Ursuline, compared to the other schools in Youngstown?
- M: I believe, as an Ursuline student, I had a great deal of pride in being an Ursuline student, but my many friends who attended South High School in ninth grade had a great pride in the students of South. So I think the kind of pride that I had in Ursuline was matched by the pride that the students had in their own high schools. While we were friends, in different schools, we would kid each other a great deal about our respective schools. Each of us maintained a pride in the school of the attendant. I speak for myself. I was very proud to be a student of Ursuline High School.
- D: Looking back at Ursuline from here, what kind of changes would you have made with the school policy when you were going there?
- M: Understand now, that I'm drawing from a long memory. This is going back forty years. I presume that as a student then, I would have liked to have a larger voice in the way that the school was administered. However, that was not considered to be usual practice in the school of the 1930's. We did, indeed, have a kind of student government, a kind of voice in the operation of the school. What I'm saying is that I'm interpolating my present convictions to the school of the 1930's.

I'm not so sure that, were I back again in the 1930's I would voice such an expectation as this.

D: What changes have you noted between Ursuline when you went there and Ursuline today?

M: Certainly size is one of them. Ursuline now has an enrollment of about sixteen hundred students, whereas in 1933, the enrollment was about one hundred and seventy-five.

There is a change in the faculty. The faculty of the 1930's was exclusively religious women, Ursuline nuns, with the exception of the football coach. Today's faculty at Ursuline numbers seventy. Twenty of them are nuns and the remainder are lay teachers and Catholic priests.

The curriculum is different now than it was in the 1930's. Then Ursuline High School had a restricted college preparatory program. Ursuline High School today offers a broader curriculum. It tends to respond to the needs of a wider variety of students. The extra-curricular activities of the 1970's are varied. When one contrasts this with the relatively few extracurricular activities of the 1930's, there is a striking contrast. In these ways, I think, there are great changes in the current school.

D: Do you think it's for the better?

M: Undoubtedly, the Ursuline High School, as it functions today, is a bigger and better school in many ways. However, I want to affirm that a smaller school, which is not possible to have today, had a warmth and intimacy about it which is an inevitable loss when you have a larger institution. I do believe that the commitment of the teachers in the 1970's is as genuine as the commitment of the teachers in the 1930's. I'd like to think the quality of youth in the schools today is the same quality of youth that was there in my time.

D: Are there any other comments you would like to make about Ursuline as a student.

M: My principal and final remark would be that people whom I meet socially in the high school setting, who were students with me at Ursuline High School in the 1930's are happy to reminisce about their experience. We find that we have many anecdotes we like to share. I certainly know that we have many deep friendships.

I add that Ursuline High School has been an important part of my formation.

D: As superintendent of schools, what was your position as far as Ursuline High School was concerned?

M: When I was the superintendent of the Catholic schools, I was superintendent of Ursuline High School.

D: What did the job entail?

M: The job as superintendent relative to Ursuline High School involved the supervision of teachers and the enforcement of the state teacher's certification requirements. The principal operated the school within the guidelines of the Catholic school system and was directly responsible to the administration of the superintendent.

The students of Ursuline were related to me only indirectly because they were under the immediate direction of the Ursuline faculty and principal of those days, which would be roughly in the 1950's.

D: What type of difficulties and problems did you face in regard to Ursuline?

M: When I was superintendent?

D: Yes.

M: I'd say two. In the 1950's, we had a rapidly growing enrollment. We had a problem of overcrowding at Ursuline High School in the early 1950's. We attempted to meet that overcrowding problem by a staggered school day, whereby some of the students, for example, came at eight in the morning and left at one. Then others came at ten in the morning and left at four.

A second problem we faced was when the second Catholic high school was built on the South Side. When Cardinal Mooney was started, we needed to draw an attendance district between the two schools. It was very challenging to try to find the appropriate dividing territory between the two schools to satisfy the patrons and the students who were involved.

D: Were the problems that you had solved eventually by the building of Cardinal Mooney?



- M: In retrospect, most problems seemed as if they were easy to solve, but when one is living through them, they present some very different challenges. For example, when we were in the overcrowded conditions at Ursuline in the early 1950s, we needed to enlist the support of Catholic parents for a fund drive. This was an experience that was pleasant to engage in because Catholic people wanted to expand the school. Nonetheless, there arose many situations that required close attention and a lot of cooperation from many people. I'd say that the problems relative to overcrowding were solved easily enough. They weren't necessarily solved easily but they were solved well with the cooperation of others.
- D: Did you find that there was a good relationship between yourself and the principal of Ursuline?
- M: Yes. When I became superintendent of schools in the 1950s, the principal was Father Glen Holbrook. He had been principal for about seven years before I became the superintendent. He was very cooperative with me, and he was a man who, because of his experience, had many insights into running a high school. He was succeeded by Monsignor Reagan, who served as principal into the 1960s. With both of these principals, I had a very good working relationship.
- D: Are there any other comments you'd like to make about your relationship as superintendent to Ursuline High School?
- M: I was always conscious of the fact that I had been a student at Ursuline High School. When I went there as superintendent, I particularly enjoyed remembering what part of the old building I had occupied, and I would reminisce a little about some of the earlier days. My association with the Ursuline Sisters who continue to be part of the Ursuline faculty, was always very pleasant. I came to know and admire so many of the new faculty that my contacts with Ursuline were always very positive and very well received.
- D: Thank you, Bishop.

END OF INTERVIEW