

McDonnell, Kilian, O.S.B., 1921-

Papers, 1955-2015.

SJU Manuscript Collection 4

Locations:

Boxes: 1176-87; 1214-1219; 1267; 1366; 1572-1574; 1996-2000; 2038-2039; 2278-2282; 2351-2352; 2377-2382; 2474-2477; 2532; 2790;

Shelves: 007/5-7; 008/7 055/7; 056/2; 061/2-3

38.70 cubic ft. (74 archival boxes)

Update: January 7, 2025

ABSTRACT: Collection includes personal and professional papers, publications by and about Fr. Kilian McDonnell, O.S.B., and the Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research (re-named the Collegeville Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research in 2006), his research, scholarship, and poetry.

ARRANGEMENT: The files are organized alphabetically by folder name.

ACCESS RESTRICTIONS: There are no access restrictions on the materials, and the collection is open to all members of the public.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES: [Source: Saint John's Abbey, 2009.]

Father Kilian (William Perry) McDonnell, OSB, was born in 1921 in Great Falls, Montana, and attended school in Velva, North Dakota. He entered the novitiate of Saint John's Abbey in 1945, made first profession in 1946, finished his BA at SJU in 1947, did graduate study in liturgy at Notre Dame and in library science at the Catholic University of Washington, D.C., and was ordained in June 1951. After serving as a pastor in Hastings and Detroit Lakes, Fr. Kilian did further theological studies at the University of Ottawa in Canada where he obtained a Licentiate in theology in 1960. He continued with his theological studies from June 1960 to 1963. He spent a semester or year at various European universities, including Trier, Tubingen, Munster, and Heidelberg. He also did research in ecumenical issues in Paderborn, Geneva, Oxford and Edinburgh. He received his doctorate, magna cum laude, from Trier, Germany in 1963. He returned to teach theology at Saint John's University from 1964 to 1992.

Father Kilian's most acclaimed accomplishment was as 1967 founder and director of the St. John's Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research (later renamed the Collegeville Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research) in 1967 in Collegeville, with its own Marcel Breuer-designed housing for scholars from all over the country and world. He continued as its director and then President of the Institute from 1973 to the present. Father Kilian is often considered to be an "apostle for unity." After the Second Vatican Council led to the development of the office of Christian unity, Father Kilian was guest of World Council of Churches 4th Assembly in Uppsala, Sweden in 1968; consultant for the United Council of Presbyterian and Congregationalist Churches in 1970; participant in the Faith and Order Conference on Ordination in Geneva in 1970; consultant to the Methodist World Alliance-Roman Catholic Consultation in 1970; Liaison between Vatican and Catholic Charismatic Renewal from 1974 to 1980; co-chair in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and Roman Catholic Consultation from 1970-1973; co-chair of the international Dialogue between Pentecostal Churches and Secretariate for Promoting Christian Unity in Rome from 1972 – 2001; member of the International Disciples and Roman Catholic Dialogue, 1973-2001; and member of the National Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue, 1969-1992.

Father Kilian received the Papal Award for Ecumenism, *Pro Pontifice et Ecclesia*, in 1983, and the *Pax Christi* Award from Saint John's University in 1984. In 1999 he received an honorary doctorate from Loyola University in Chicago. In 1993 Father Kilian was awarded the John Courtney Murray Award from the Catholic Theology Society of America in Washington, DC.

Father Kilian is a prolific writer. His books include *John Calvin, the Church and the Eucharist* and *The Holy Spirit and Power: The Catholic Charismatic Renewal*. He edited the three-volume collection, *Presence, Power, Praise: Documents on the Charismatic Renewal*, and co-authored a number of other books, including, with George Montague, *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, which was published in seven languages. He has contributed well over 200 articles or book chapters in the areas of ecclesiology, pneumatology, trinity, reformation theology, and ecumenism. He was associate editor of *One in Christ*, an ecumenical quarterly published in England. He was Scripture editor for *WORSHIP* magazine for three years; editor of *Sponsa Regis* for four years; and a columnist for *Sign Magazine* for seven years. Father Kilian was a consultant of the Pontifical Council of Promoting Christian Unity from 1987 to the present.

One of the later efforts of Father Kilian was his life-long love of writing poetry. His first book of poetry, published by the Liturgical Press in 2003, was *Swift Lord, You are Not*. His collection of poetry wrestles with themes such as feminism, prayer and aging. A second book, *Yahweh's Other Shoe*, was published in 2006, followed by *God Drops and Loses Things* in 2009. [Copies of these books are also in the Archives (61/3 Box 11).]

COLLECTION CITATION: This collection should be cited as:

McDonnell, Kilian, 1921-. Papers, 1955-2015. SJU Manuscript Collection 4. St. John's University (Collegeville, Minn.).

RELATED COLLECTIONS: AC 14, Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research.

ACQUISITION: This collection was accessioned on January 11, 1985. The accession number was 363. Subsequent accessions were donated to the Archives by Kilian McDonnell, or transferred to the Archives by the Ecumenical Institute.

Accession numbers: MC04.363, MC04.371, MC04.391, MC04.411, MC04.453, MC04.525, MC04.537, MC04.560, MC04.573, MC04.576, MC04.583, MC04.600, MC04.645, MC04.98-001, MC04.98-011, MC04.2001-007, MC04.2005-05, 2010-009, 2015-033.

PROCESSING: Most of the collection was appraised and processed between 1985 and 2005. In November 2010, Father Kilian's poetry drafts, to date, were added to the collection, as were copies of his three books of poetry.

SUBJECT TERMS:

- McDonnell, Kilian.
 - Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research (Collegeville, Minn.)
 - Collegeville Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research.
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INVENTORY: For contents, see the "[McDonnell, Kilian, O.S.B. Papers](#)" collection in the Saint John's University Archives and Special Collections database on ArchivesSpace.

Fr. Kilian's poetry drafts are shelved thus:

- Shelf 007/5 (Box 1): Poems Volume 1 A-D
- Shelf 007/6 (Box 2): Poems Volume 1 E-M
- Shelf 007/6 (Box 3): Poems Volume 1 N-Y
- Shelf 007/7 (Box 4): Poems Volume 2 A-Y (April 26, 2010)
- Shelf 007/7 (Box 5): Poems May-July 2008 and June-July 2008
- Shelf 008/7 (Box 6): Poems 2008; 2010

A list of the poem titles, not necessarily complete, can be found in Box 1.

Box 1 also includes two other 3-ring binders:

1. "Archives – Publications – Volume 1" which includes copies of publications in which Kilian's poetry was published, e.g. *Confrere*, the *ISTI Sun*, the *National Catholic Reporter*, and the newsletter of the Ecumenical Institute.
2. "Poetry Archive Volume 2 Begun around the 5th of July, 2007" – there appears to be no index or title listing of the poems in this binder.

Box 5 also includes:

1. Small 3-ring binder with spine label "Poetry Archive – Index to Volume 1" (containing 2007 and 2010 lists by title, first revised date, and last revised date).
2. Small 3-ring binder with spine label "Archives – 3 x 5 Card File Index" [which identified access points to Kilian's bibliographic card file].
3. A large 3-ring binder labeled "Publications" containing:
 - a. Handwritten poetry drafts in spiral notebooks
 - b. Large envelope labeled: "Poems received back from Tom McKeown with critique Oct. 27, 2001"
 - c. Large envelope labeled "Poems received back from Tom McKeown"
 - d. Large envelope labeled "Poems Critiqued by Michael Dennis Browne, Iowa Writers Workshop, Summer 2000 or 2001"
 - e. In the binder itself: poetry drafts, some handwritten, some typed, and some newspaper clippings.